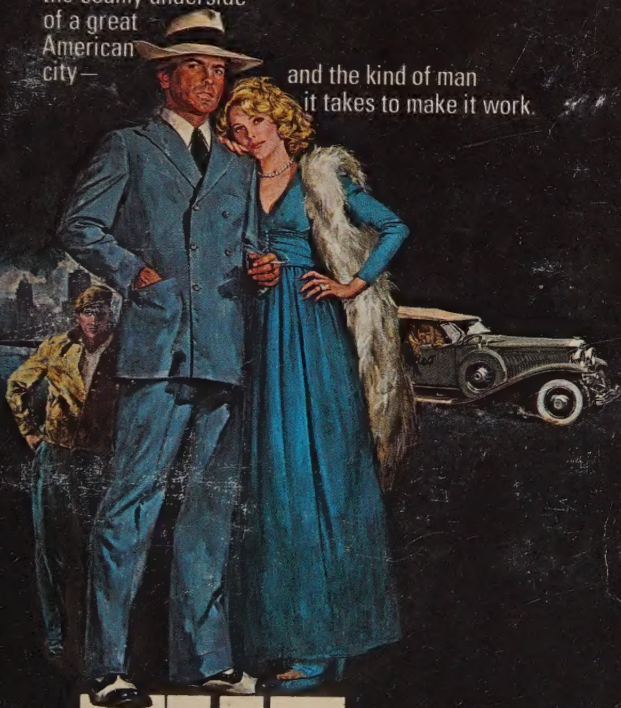


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To Eddie Bracken, MY FRIEND
Thanks for making it all possible, 'partner.'

BOOK ONE

COMPASSIONS AND TRANSGRESSIONS

Chapter 1

Six-foot-four, two-hundred-thirty-pound ex-boxer "Iron Mike" Riordan wheeled the Packard limousine to the curb in front of the Royale Hotel on Chicago's West Side, just missing a shabby derelict who was lying face down in the gutter.

"Goddamn winos," the chauffeur muttered.

The passenger, Ward Committeeman "Dude" Brennan, grunted his general agreement. Both men alighted from the car and slowly walked to the inert figure now bathed in the glare of the limousine's powerful headlights.

"Turn him over, Mike," the ward leader said matter-of-factly.

Riordan placed his left foot under the man's shoulder and rolled him over onto his back. The bum mumbled something, but did not open his eyes.

"It isn't him, chief," Iron Mike said.

The ward leader reached into his pocket and pulled out a large roll of money. He peeled off several bills and handed them to his chauffeur.

"Call the meat wagon and see that he gets admitted to the D.T. ward at County. Give this to the guys in the squadrol and tell them not to book the poor slob."

The chauffeur nodded, pocketed the money, and walked into the hotel.

While he waited for Mike's return, Dude Brennan lit a cigarette and tossed the burnt match into the gutter next to the alcoholic.

When Riordan came out of the hotel he said quietly, "They're on the way."

"Okay. Listen, Mike, while you're over at County check and see how Ma is doing. I called around ten o'clock and she was still about the same. I'm going upstairs now—Jackie is waiting for me," Dude said, and walked away without waiting for a reply.

Mike watched the handsome politician disappear behind the double glass doors of the hotel and felt a close affection for the younger man who was not only his employer, but his friend as well. Things might have worked out differently if he had met Dude years ago. Dude would certainly never have sold him down the river in his ring career the way his manager and trainer had. Dude would have looked out for him. Just maybe Mike could have had a shot at the heavyweight title, instead of the one-way ticket to palookaville that Segretti gave him.

Within a few minutes on that hot September night the police van arrived. Mike nodded to the patrolmen, both of whom he knew.

"What'cha got, Mike?" the heavysset officer asked, leaning out of the cab of the van.

"Just another bummy. The boss wants him admitted to the shakes ward at County. I'll meet you guys at the emergency entrance." Mike climbed back into the Packard, and waited as the two policemen went about the routine task they had done hundreds of times during their careers. They took a worn canvas stretcher from the back of the truck and placed the unconscious body on it as if it were not really a body at all, merely someone's unwanted bundle of old dirty clothes. They secured their cargo safely in the rear of the van, then waved to Mike that they were ready to roll. Mike started the engine of his powerful car. As he pulled away from the curb, he heard a faint rumble of thunder and hoped to hell that it would rain and cool things off for a change.

From the outside, the Royale Hotel appeared little different from any of the many other flophouses that

dotted West Madison Street, from the Northwestern Station at Canal Street on the east side to Kedzie Avenue on the west side. Even the lobby's faded furniture and ancient front desk were carbon copies of the others. A cage elevator was at the far end of the lobby; near it an old man napped in a wicker chair, a copy of the morning paper on his lap, open at the sports page.

What made this particular hotel unique was that it had only one tenant: Dude Brennan. The entire second floor had been converted into one large apartment. The sumptuous furnishings had been selected by one of the foremost interior decorators in the city at a cost of well over four thousand dollars. That bill had been paid by a Mr. A. Conforti, of Chicago's fashionable suburb, Oak Park. In return for this modest investment, he received a substantial income from the booking operation housed in the rear two thirds of the first floor, and the Saturday-night crap games held there. Of course, a ten-percent cut was paid weekly to Ward Committeeman Patrick J. Brennan.

When the first cool breeze drifted through the open bedroom windows, Dude woke up. After a few minutes he struck a match, and held it close to his left wrist. The delicate gold hands of his expensive watch read twenty minutes past two. He stared out the open window at the light rain and the reflections of the neon world below.

A trolley clanged, lonely, on some faraway track in the still night and he felt a compassion for all lonely night trolleys and he did not stir for what seemed hours until the strange emotion passed. He arose quietly so that he did not disturb the young girl lying beside him. He showered, returned to the bedroom, selected a pair of silk shorts from the bureau drawer, put them on, and walked to the window. The rain was slackening as he looked down on *his* street. Halfway down the block four or five bums had gathered to watch the police struggling through the doorway of a flophouse, carrying a stretcher that held the remains of a nameless nobody, a man whose dreams had long since vanished, leaving just the shell of a man to

wander aimlessly through this maze of cobblestones and trolley wires, of mission dinners and ten cent beds, of quarter jugs of wine and dreamless sleep, of remorse and despair, of promises broken and promises long forgotten. A skid-row bum whose life was timeless and empty, waiting for the day or night when he would take the last ride in a police van to the county morgue, then on to an unmarked grave in Potter's Field where wasted lives and lost chances are forever buried. The sight depressed Dude. His father was one of those bums. He turned his attention to the girl on the bed.

Jacqueline Lee Devereaux was remarkably beautiful. At twenty-six, she looked nineteen or twenty. She had been born and raised in a small farm town in Ohio called Toronto. Because her stepfather had beaten her at least twice a week, when she turned eighteen she hurriedly married the son of the local druggist and they moved to Chicago. She did not love him so she became terribly upset when she learned that she was pregnant.

Life for her became more tolerable when the baby arrived. It was, as she had hoped, a girl. For a time she was happy. Her husband had a good job in a foundry and had become assistant foreman. Everything seemed to be going smoothly for the young family until that black Tuesday when the stock market collapsed. The foundry closed. Soon it seemed everyone was out of work. In less than six months they lost their car and their furniture and were forced to move into a cheap furnished cold-water flat on Racine Avenue just north of Washington Boulevard. Then her husband took to the bottle. He slept days and prowled the pool halls and speakeasys at night. Often he beat her. One night he said good-bye and she never saw him again. A year later she was granted a divorce on grounds of desertion.

Unable to find a job, and barely managing to live on sparse relief checks, she drifted into prostitution. Ashamed and lonely, she was an easy mark for Rudy Karwowski, who gave her the first shot of morphine. Jackie was soon

chained to him for her four fixes per day. She was on the street for three years before her first arrest.

That March morning, a year and a half ago, the rat-faced Rudy Karwowski had been waiting in the committeeman's storefront office when Dude arrived. Dude sat down behind his massive walnut desk and then asked sharply, "What the hell do you want, weasel?"

The man looked pained when he replied, "You don't gotta call me that, boss."

"Your ass. I'm busy, now what is it?"

"I need some clout."

"Why?"

"There's this girl, see? Nice kid, see? Got hauled in for hustling one of the vice squad aces, see? She goes to court today, see? At Eleventh and State. . . ." His voice trailed off.

Dude stared at him for several minutes, ignoring the entreaty. He said slowly, "I hear you're peddling the powder again, Rudy. Is that right?"

Rudy said, "Naw, who's been talking that shit?"

In two quick strides Dude was out from behind the desk and had the little man by the shirt front. "Don't lie to me, you goddamn Polack bastard!" he yelled into Karwowski's ashen face. "If I hear one more time that you're selling dope in this ward I'll personally blow your goddamn head off."

When the committeeman sat down again, he asked in a normal tone of voice, "What is the girl's name and what judge is she going before?"

"She got a funny French name, Jacqueline Devereaux see? And she's up before Emmett Gorman. He's sittin' in Women's Court all this mont'." Karwowski was still pale. A trace of spittle oozed from the left side of the precinct captain's mouth.

The ward leader scribbled something on the note pad in front of him. After a few moments he said, "Okay, Rudy, tell your hooker to plead guilty. She'll get a year's probation and be assigned to report to Maude Fallon."

"Thanks, boss, anythin' else?"

"Yeah, two things. One, have your friend in here at one-thirty this afternoon, and two, find yourself another way to hustle a buck. Before prohibition was repealed you nearly got yourself killed running booze. I guarantee that if you continue peddling dope you're going to wind up in the morgue."

"I tol' ya, chief, I don't do that no more."

Dude frowned as the little man left the office, and made a note to have Karwowski watched very closely for the next several months.

That afternoon when he returned from lunch, Jacqueline Devereaux was waiting in the ward office. Dude was startled by the natural beauty of the girl. She was slender, and had long graceful legs. Her long black hair cascaded down around her shoulders, a strong contrast to the soft whiteness of her face. Her deep brown eyes were soft, and held a certain innocence. Her sensuous full rich lips were curiously formed into a slight pout. Her voice was rich and soft as she asked, "You wanted to see me, Mr. Brennan?"

Dude marveled at the melodic tone, and suddenly felt uncomfortable in the presence of this lovely girl. He thought it incredible that she was a whore. She just didn't seem to be the type. He hesitated before he said, "I just wanted you to know that while you are pulling this probation and living in this ward you are to live up to the rules they explained to you."

He was conscious of the unnatural huskiness of his voice and silently cursed himself for acting like a high-school freshman. He cleared his throat and continued. "I've arranged for you to have a job as a cocktail waitress at the Ebony Tap on Halsted Street. Ed Morgan, the owner, is expecting you tomorrow afternoon at five o'clock."

"Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Is there anything else?" she asked softly.

"Have dinner with me this evening." He blurted it out without thinking. He was half afraid she might refuse.

"I would be very happy to," she murmured.

"Fine, I'll pick you up at eight," he said awkwardly, then added clumsily, "Call me Dude."

She smiled and nodded her assent. She rose in one fluid motion and extended her hand to him. He held it for a moment, and then in an instant she was gone. Dude stared dumbly at the empty doorway for several minutes. He was trembling.

Over the next few months Jacqueline and Dude were seen together often in the finest supper clubs in Chicago.

For months he had not known the truth: it was just last night that she had told him, sobbing uncontrollably, about her addiction. He had promised her the finest medical attention in a private sanatorium just west of the city, under the direction of Dr. Benjamin Kessell, one of the finest psychiatrists in the Midwest. He had also promised that her six-year-old daughter Kimmie would be cared for by his good friend Maude Fallon of the probation department. All of these things were on Dude's mind as he watched the sleeping girl.

Suddenly the telephone rang. He quickly crossed the room and picked up the receiver before it could ring a second time.

"Chief? Mike." The voice hesitated. "Chief, your Mom died a little while ago."

"Well, we knew it was coming. I guess I should have been at the hospital."

"I'm sorry, chief."

"Thanks, Mike. Do me a favor, will you?"

"Name it."

"Call John O'Keefe and tell him I'll be by in the morning to make all of the necessary arrangements."

"No need to. Father Devlin was with her when she went and before he left the hospital he signed the release and the hospital called O'Keefe's."

"All right. Nothing more we can do tonight; see you in the office about eight-thirty in the morning."

"G'night, chief."

Jacqueline stirred and opened her eyes slowly. "Hi, Irish," she said dreamily.

"Hi, kitten," Dude replied, crossing the room to sit on the edge of the bed. He took her hands in his and looked long into her eyes. "Ready for the trip today?" he asked softly.

She reached up and her arms circled his neck, and she whispered, "Let's not talk about it now. Just love me, Irish."

He drew her close to him, seeking her lips. Over and over in his mind he thought, I love you. I love you.

The rain began to fall once more.

It was precisely eight-fifty in the morning when Jackie, Dude, and Dude's chauffeur-bodyguard, Iron Mike Rior-dan, entered the committeeman's storefront office, with the familiar lettering across the spotless windowpane.

FOURTH WARD REGULAR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION P. M. BRENNAN, COMMITTEEMAN

Above this announcement could still be seen the remnants of the once-proud words, "Office of the Alderman of the Fourth Ward. T. J. Hanrahan, Alderman." But since 'Big Tim's' death, his name had been removed.

Beatrice Elizabeth Hoke, the committeeman's honey-blond secretary, rose from her desk and rushed to her boss. She kissed him tenderly on the cheek and he could feel the warm tears on her face.

"When Mike called this morning and told me about your mother, I . . ." she started but could not finish.

He patted her shoulders gently, whispering, "It's okay, Princess, it's okay." He waited until the young girl regained her composure, then said, "We've got a lot of things to do today, beautiful, and we should get started." She stood on tiptoe and kissed him lightly on the cheek again. "Ready for work, boss."

Dude strode to his desk, glancing briefly at Jackie and Mike. "Sit down," he said softly, feeling a bit embarrassed at the scene they had just witnessed. He took out his

checkbook and started writing. Without looking up, he said to his friend and bodyguard, "I'm going to give you two checks, Mike. The first is for twenty-five hundred and you can drop it off at O'Keefe's to pay for the funeral, and the second one is for three grand and goes to Dr. Kessell."

The huge man took the pieces of paper and stuffed them into his vest pocket. "Anything else, chief?" he asked.

"Not until you get back which should be around noon. Then I'll be needing the car for a while." Then he added, "Be sure to tell O'Keefe that any arrangements that god-damn priest Devlin has made are to be disregarded. Tell him that I'll be over later to take care of everything."

"Check," answered the bodyguard.

Dude then came from behind his desk, looking lovingly at the prim slightly nervous Jacqueline. She rose, and before she had taken a step she was in his arms, her cheek on his shoulder.

"Everything is going to be all right," he said with a huskiness his deep voice took on whenever his emotions welled up in him. "You'll be out before you know it. I'll call you every day, kitten."

She looked up at him and in a little girl's voice said, "I know." She kissed him and he marveled as always at the softness of her lips. He had never kissed a woman like her before. In a bare whisper she said, "I love you, Irish." And for the first time since he had known her he replied, "I love you, kitten." And she knew he meant it.

He turned to Mike, punching him affectionately on his huge arm. Then he said, "Start moving, Buster. I'll be needing you today. Be sure you drive carefully, I don't want anything to happen to my kitten."

"Nothing is ever going to hurt you or Jackie as long as I'm alive," his friend said as he and the girl walked out the door.

Dude watched Mike help Jackie into the sleek Packard touring car. When the girl was seated, Mike gently closed the door. A faint trace of a smile touched Dude's

lips: he felt warm toward that gigantic man who was so careful with the precious cargo entrusted to him.

He returned to his desk, and sat idly rubbing his jaw, watching Bea busily opening the morning mail. He knew that his secretary was in love with him and he wondered what she thought of the scene she had just witnessed. He had often thought of having an affair with her, but never had. Not because she was not willing—she was all too willing—but he knew that it would probably end in marriage, and Dude had not been ready for that just yet. His career came first. He was certain that someday soon he would be mayor and he had not wanted the responsibility of a wife at least until that day arrived.

Soon he would become the next alderman of the fourth ward. At the age of forty-one he would be the city's youngest councilman. The backing of the powerful Democratic machine ruled by the iron fist of Mayor James Richard Whalen, would ensure winning. And his bonus, as the mayor's protégé, would be the chairmanship of the top committee: the finance committee, a post coveted by each of the other forty-nine aldermen.

Bea had turned on her desk radio, and an orchestra began to play "Street of Dreams." She stole a glance at Dude. He knew that she was watching him and he thought of the words.

Love laughs at a King,
Kings don't mean a thing
On the Street of Dreams.

Dreams broken in two,
Can be made like new
On the Street of Dreams.

He watched her take a dainty handkerchief from her purse: she dabbed at the corner of her eyes.

Gold, silver and gold,
All you can hold
Is in the moonbeams;

She returned the handkerchief to her purse, and began applying fresh makeup.

Poor, no one is poor,
Long as love is sure
On the Street of Dreams.

Suddenly Bea asked, "Are you really in love with her, Dude?"

"I don't know, Princess, I guess so."

"Damn you. She isn't good enough for you."

"I know."

"Are you going to marry her?"

"No," he lied.

"Does that mean I might still have a chance?"

"We've been all through this once before Bea. I just don't know."

"Okay. A little hope is better than none."

"Don't, Bea. Let's drop the subject."

"Okay." She nodded, then managed a smile and asked, "What's to be done first?"

"Cancel all of my appointments for the rest of the day, then notify all of our precinct captains that the funeral will be tomorrow. Ten o'clock Mass at St. Brendan's. Rosary service will be at seven-thirty this evening at O'Keefe's. Oh, and call Lynn at the mayor's office and have her spread the word."

She was already on the phone before he finished. He picked up his private phone and was about to give the operator the number he wanted when a slim young priest entered the office.

"Are you Mr. Brennan?"

"That's right, padre. What's your problem? Collections been down?"

"I'm here at the personal request of Father Devlin to inform you that your mother passed away early this morning."

Dude was clenching his teeth so hard that the muscles in his jaw stood out very prominently. When he spoke his

voice was very low and deadly. "Look, errand boy. You can trot back to old busybody and tell him that I knew she died hours ago. But as long as you're here you can take care of a few details for me. I want the rosary service to be tonight at seven-thirty and the funeral Mass at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. And since O'Keefe is right in your backyard tell him of the arrangements. Also tell him I want the best casket he's got, he's already been paid. Tell him to make sure the obits are put in the first editions of all the papers. They will automatically print an additional article."

He then reached for his checkbook and wrote out a check payable to St. Brendan's in the amount of two hundred dollars. When he had finished he threw the check across the desk, saying, "That should be enough to buy her way into your goddamn phony heaven."

The priest pocketed the check and in parting said, "Thank you. Your mother would have been proud to hear that last remark."

As the priest started out the door, Dude shouted at him, "Don't go looking for my old man either. If he shows up at that wake, he'll find himself in the emergency ward at County with his gin-soaked head busted."

"I'll relay your request to Father Devlin," he replied, and quickly left the office before the committeeman could answer him.

About an hour later, Dude stared through the plate-glass window at the rain that had just begun again. On his private telephone, he gave the operator the Wilmette number he wanted. In a few moments the cool, crisp voice of the receptionist came on the line.

"Parkway Convalescent Home. May I help you?"

"Please. This is Mr. Brennan, may I speak to Dr. Kessell?"

In a matter of a few seconds, Dude heard the smooth cultured voice of the psychiatrist. "Good morning, Dude."

"Ben, I just want to make sure that Miss Devereaux will be taken care of personally by you. How long before she can be released?"

"That's hard to say, Dude," the doctor cautiously answered, then continued, "Three to six weeks, probably, depending on her recuperative powers. She is in the process of being formally admitted. Would you care to speak with her?"

"Not now, Ben, but I'll be in touch every day. And thanks for letting me bother you last night to make the arrangements," Dude said gratefully.

"My pleasure, Dude, and I'll keep you posted."

Dude then phoned his close friend, Detective Lieutenant Frank Quinncannon of the Narcotics Division of the Chicago Police Department. The detective was not in his office and Dude left a message for him to call.

Just as he was about to place a third call, his phone rang. "Yeah?"

"Mr. Brennan, you have my deepest sympathy on the death of your mother." Dude recognized the voice of the syndicate boss, Conforti.

"Thank you, Tony. But how did you know?"

The Sicilian chuckled, replying, "You know that nothing happens in this town that I don't know about. Brennan, I must see you sometime today."

The committeeman paused a few moments, then said reluctantly, "Okay, Tony. When and where?"

"Let us say two o'clock at the usual place?"

"Okay." When he hung up, Dude was shaken by his conversation. He drummed his fingers in a monotonous staccato on his desk and thought, Here it comes. Today is the day I pay the piper. That wop bastard is going to put the screws to me, and there is no way I can dare turn him down.

It was as if Bea could read his mind. She said, "Dude, you don't owe that animal a thing. Make your break with him now before it's too late."

"It's already too late, Princess," he replied absently. He quickly picked up his phone before the young girl could pursue the matter. "State 2000."

"State 2000," the operator repeated nasally.

"City Hall. With whom did you wish to speak?"

"Extension 252." Dude waited: several seconds passed before the gruff voice of the chief building inspector barked into the receiver, jarring Dude out of his momentary lethargy.

"Latham here."

"Bill? This is Dude. As of today Rudy Karwowski doesn't work for the city any longer. His clout no longer exists."

"What has that Polack done now?"

"Let's just say that he is unable to fulfill the requirements necessary to carry out his duties properly."

"You're the boss, Dude," Latham said mildly. "I'll give him a choice of resigning or being fired, and if there's any static I'll refer him to you."

"Thanks, Bill. I don't think he will raise any objections."

"Truthfully I'm glad to be rid of him. Send me a replacement from your ward as soon as you can. We're pretty damned short of good people these days. And please, Dude, not another one like that one."

"I'll have a good replacement for you within ten days, Bill, and thanks."

"Anytime, partner."

He had no sooner replaced the receiver when the phone rang. It was Lynn Sullivan, the mayor's private secretary. "I'm sorry about your mother, Dude," she said softly.

"Thanks, honey," he muttered.

"The mayor wants to talk to you. Hold on a sec."

He waited several moments before he heard the deep booming voice of the most powerful politician in the country. "My condolences, son. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, sir," he said glumly.

"How about lunch?" Whalen asked.

The committeeman glanced at his watch before replying. "I'm waiting for Mike to return from an errand I sent him on. He should be back by eleven-thirty. How about noon at the Morrison?"

"Fine, son. Bring that beautiful secretary with you. I always like to have a pretty face across from me at lunch." Dude smiled. The sixty-odd-year-old man was still quite virile.

"How about you bringing Lynn along instead? I need Bea here to take care of some things for me," Dude said, still smiling.

"Fine, son, fine. I'll see you at noon at my table," Whalen said and hung up abruptly in his typical fashion.

"Bea, will you order some flowers?"

"Already taken care of."

"You're an angel."

"Glad you think so. How about marrying me?"

Dude laughed good-naturedly and said, "I thought the boys were supposed to do the asking?"

She wrinkled her nose and pursued the subject. "Well, then, how about an affair?"

"I don't think I'll have the time," he said teasingly, "I'm thinking of having one with Lynn Sullivan."

Bea crossed her legs and screwed her lovely face into a mock pout before replying. "That peroxide bitch has hot pants for any male old enough to go to bed with her. Besides, she's no match for me."

"I thought the two of you were such good friends," Dude said, laughing.

"Try me," Bea shot back. "Let's go up to your apartment now."

"No dice. And speaking of people with hot pants . . ." he said.

"Go to hell, you dumb Irish bastard."

Dude laughed, and asked, "How about running next door and getting us some coffee? It might cool you down."

She paused at the doorway and said in dead earnest, "I'll get you one way or another."

Dude was no longer smiling. "That's enough, Bea," he said gently. "It would never work out."

He could see the tears start in her eyes. "Oh, damn!" she said, and went out the door.

At eleven-forty-five, Dude alighted from his car in front of the Morrison Hotel. "Pick me up at one, Mike; we have to be out in Forest Park by two."

"Check," said the bodyguard.

The committeeman quickly entered the hotel and started up the stairs leading to the elegant dining room. A familiar voice behind him said, "Hey, Dude, wait up." It was the dapper, freckled Joe Simons, president of the county board. When he caught up with Dude he almost had to stand on tiptoe to pat him on the shoulder. "Sorry about the passing of your mother, is there anything I can do?"

"Thanks, Joe," Dude said quietly. "It's just one of those things."

"I understand. I'm having lunch with Emmett Gorman, will you join us?"

"I'd like to, Joe, but I have an appointment with the mayor."

"Well, at least let me send you over a drink?"

"Thanks, buddy."

They shook hands warmly at the entrance to the dining room. "I'll probably see you at the funeral home later this evening," Joe Simons said. Dude nodded. When he saw the mayor and his secretary, he threaded his way through the tables to join them.

The rotund city leader and his lithe secretary were standing when he reached their table. Both embraced him briefly and extended condolences.

The trio had no sooner sat down when a waiter appeared. "Compliments of President Simons, Your Honor." He placed a double Manhattan on the rocks in front of the mayor, a frozen daiquiri before the secretary and a double martini on the rocks before the ward leader.

"Thank you, Ralph," boomed the mayor. "Their next round is on me."

Dude studied the pair across the table while they scanned the oversized menus. The mayor was built like a Chinese Buddha, and at their first meeting Dude had had a wild desire to follow the Oriental custom and pat

him on the belly for good luck. He smiled, and turned his attention to the exquisite Lynn Sullivan. Her hair was in the current Jean Harlow vogue, platinum blonde, enhancing her delicate beauty, which Dude thought excelled the film star's. He recalled his earlier conversation with Bea, and although his reference to having an affair with Lynn had been made in jest, in watching her now he began to have serious thoughts of such an arrangement. The only flaw was her husband-Jack and their four children. However, it was common knowledge that their marriage had deteriorated during the past year or so. A divorce in the near future seemed a certainty.

The mayor began to give the order to the waiter. He invariably ordered for everyone at his table, regardless of their personal preferences. But even with his many and varied idiosyncracies, this man was indeed a political phenomenon, Dude thought, and marveled at him.

James Richard Whalen was one of twelve children born and raised in the sprawling Back-of-the-Yards predominantly Irish neighborhood. His father, James Anthony Whalen, left Ireland at the age of fourteen and upon his arrival in Chicago, after a brief six-month stay as a long-shoreman in Boston, took a job as a laborer for the Illinois Wabash and Southern Railroad, and within a few short months worked his way up to the position of fireman. Later he became one of the best engineers on the line, and with overtime runs he managed to provide a decent but modest home for his wife Mary Ellen and their growing brood.

Young James Richard, the eldest, was well liked. At age eleven he began running errands for the local Democratic ward committeeman and alderman. He kept the vehicles of the local politicians washed and waxed, and for this he received a dollar a week. By the time he was in his third year at Immaculata High School, he was an assistant precinct captain, and he knew that politics was going to be his career. On the day before his graduation, his father suffered a severe stroke and was forced to retire on the meager railroad pension. It fell upon young

James, as the eldest, to supplement the family income. The alderman, who liked him, had him appointed as the personal bailiff to the now retired State Supreme Court Judge Lincoln Coleman. It was largely due to the jurist's influence over the young Whalen that the following fall he enrolled in night classes at the Trenton Law School.

In less than five years he was admitted to the Illinois Bar, and began his meteoric rise to leadership of one of the strongest political machines in the country. After he had had two successful terms as city clerk, and one term as county treasurer, his influence had spread far beyond the confines of the Irish wards. He won the Democratic primary for mayor, beating out four seasoned rivals. Republican domination in any one of the fifty wards was virtually nonexistent, and so at the age of forty-two he became the city's youngest mayor.

Now in his fourth term in office, he had welded together the most powerful political organization in the United States, so that in the recent presidential election (amidst cries of vote fraud and rigged elections) Chicago delivered the votes as promised by Mayor Whalen, and it was this pivotal city that ensured the election for a grateful president.

After Dude had served in the army, he went to work for Tim Hanrahan in the fourth ward. Whalen realized the potential in this enterprising young man and made him his personal protégé. Over the years Dude engineered many deals for Whalen and helped make him a wealthy man. Although Dude took all the risks in the payoffs, in the long run he knew it would work out to his advantage. Now he knew, as did every politician in the city, that Whalen was not going to run for a fifth term. Soon his successor would have to be decided on. Dude was certain that Whalen was going to give him the nod.

Halfway through lunch the mayor put down his knife and fork and his ice-blue eyes gazed at Dude. "Dude," he began slowly, "since Louise and I never had children of

our own, we have taken to you as our son. You've worked damned hard to get where you are today. Too hard to start tossing it all down the drain."

Dude stared straight ahead and thought, Goddamn, he knows. The sonofabitch knows everything.

"First things first," Whalen continued. "This election coming up is very important to all of us. It's the first time in many years that there's been any real opposition. Morrissey and that slate of reform candidates are going to pose a real problem. Sunday will be September first and that leaves less than eight weeks to prepare. I have refrained from speaking to you in the hope that you would straighten yourself out, but time has run out and the welfare of the organization is more important than any one man."

Dude folded his napkin, then took out a cigarette. He wondered just how much the man did know. He could wait him out. He tapped the cigarette lightly on the ashtray, waiting for the explosion he was certain would come.

Before continuing, Whalen ceremoniously lit a cigar. It was an old trick used by the mayor to build up the tension in a disagreeable situation. After taking a few exaggerated puffs on the cigar, Whalen said, "It's common knowledge that you are keeping a young woman and her daughter in a four-hundred-dollar-a-month apartment on Lake Shore Drive. I'm not sitting in judgment on your moral behavior, son, God knows you are entitled to have an affair if you wish, being a bachelor and all, but for Christ's sake man, she has a record and is an addict to boot."

Dude could feel his face burning. How did the bastard know of Jackie's addiction when he had just learned of it himself? He had to say something. "You won't have to worry about her any more. I sent her out to a sanatorium this morning to take the cure. She won't be out for several weeks, and after that I'll put an end to the whole thing, Your Honor," he lied easily.

The mayor sat back and smiled for the first time since

the conversation began. "Fine, son. Just fine. Now we can get down to party business. I found out today that Father Devlin is going to be on the Courtney Blair radio show next week and that you are going to be their main subject of discussion. They are going to try to tie you in with Conforti and the syndicate. In the past few months your ward has been a wide-open district. Gambling, prostitution, narcotics, and God knows what else. I'm not going to ask you because I don't want to know whether or not you've been bought off, but if there is any connection between you and that wop, I want it broken. And I mean now."

Dude said nothing. What the hell is all this bullshit? he thought angrily. Whalen knew damn well that he did have some ties with the Sicilian. Granted, Whalen didn't know just how deeply Dude was involved—but, damn it all, he did know that he was involved.

"Starting on Monday," Whalen began anew, "there will be a succession of raids by the police throughout your ward. It will be leaked to the newspapers that the raids were planned by you in a sincere effort to rid the ward of corruption. Captain Haley will lead the campaign. He has forty of Conforti's places to hit." The mayor's eyes narrowed to mere slits and he barely whispered the ominous warning. "If they come up empty-handed it will mean that they have been tipped off, and as of this moment only you, Lynn, Haley, and myself know about this."

Although Dude was shaken by this news, he spoke calmly. "I guess I should have taken it on my own to do something like this months ago. I'll close the ward down tighter than a clam within two weeks."

The mayor beamed. "That's what I wanted to hear you say, son. By God you haven't let me down after all."

Dude smiled thinly and thought, If you only knew where I'll be in an hour you would probably have a coronary.

Lynn, who had remained silent throughout the entire conversation, brought it to a close by reminding Whalen that he had a press conference at one o'clock. Dude was

on his feet before Whalen could say anything else. "I have a few things to do before the wake tonight, so I had better get going." After they had shaken hands, the mayor placed his arm around Dude's shoulder and said, "I'll be at the Rosary service tonight, son. And don't worry. Everything is going to work out all right."

Dude hurried out, waving a good-bye to Joe Simons and Emmett Gorman. He sure had made one hell of a mess, and he was becoming fearful that he might not be able to straighten things out before the election.

Chapter 2

Antonio Rocco Conforti, like Mayor Whalen, had also been busy over the past twenty years building an organization of his own. He had survived the violent gang wars of the twenties and with the repeal of prohibition was the area's undisputed gangland boss.

Using cosmopolitan charm and cold logic, he brought the underworld's warring factions together, carving up the city to everyone's satisfaction. He was proud of the fact that it was the Chicago—and not the New York—gangs that had first stopped murdering each other. His multi-million-dollar empire was the living proof that a united organization could virtually control any city in the country. He was smug in the fact that he could buy and sell politicians, judges, and policemen as easily as most people buy fresh vegetables. And once bought and paid for there was no turning back for them.

It was barely two when Dude and Mike entered the small restaurant in suburban Forest Park and headed for the rear booth where Conforti sat, alone. Mike noticed the two young men sitting at a table some ten feet away from the syndicate head. Although they appeared to be engrossed in the racing forms before them, Mike knew that he and Dude were closely scrutinized. At the first sign of any trouble these two would act immediately.

As Dude slipped into the booth opposite Conforti, Mike nodded to him and sauntered over to the bar. He sat on the end stool where he had a clear view of both the entrance to the restaurant and the occupants in the rear.

The Sicilian was the first to speak. "I must again extend my apologies for having to bother you at this inappropriate time, but, as I said earlier, it is of extreme importance." Dude nodded, waiting.

"On Monday morning," Conforti continued, "the local gendarmes are going to swoop down into your ward in an effort to put me out of business. Although I understand the reasons for this action, I cannot allow more than a few token arrests. Above all, the Royale must not be touched. I have over twenty bagmen making their daily drops there. Therefore, operations there as well as in other places will be temporarily discontinued." Conforti handed Dude a piece of paper and said, "I have here a list of forty locations that are to be hit. The ones I have circled in red are strictly taboo."

Dude could scarcely believe his ears and blurted out in genuine wonderment, "How in the hell did you find all that out?"

The Sicilian was enjoying the look of utter surprise on the ward leader's face. "I pay out quite a bit of money every year just to find out about matters like this." He smiled.

Dude scanned the sheet of paper, then handed it back. "I can't do it," he said flatly.

"Why?"

"Whalen already suspects a strong tieup between us and he let me know that if Captain Haley comes up empty, he'll hold me accountable," Dude said seriously. Then added, "Every one of those places will have to be hit."

"No, Mr. Brennan. Those eighteen places I have circled must not be touched." The Sicilian paused, then said, "I'm giving you twenty-two places. That should be enough to satisfy your people."

"Look, Tony. You're putting me in one hell of a bind. There's no way you can buy Haley, and there's no way I can stop this thing without exposing myself. And if that happens, I'll be out all the way and since your whole base

of operations is in my ward, that means you'll be out too."

Conforti lit a long Havana cigar before replying. "You do have a point there, but unfortunately I still must pull my people out of those eighteen places."

"Be reasonable, Tony. I've told you I can't afford to let Haley come up short."

"That's as far as I'll go, Brennan. There will be eighteen closed-up joints come Monday morning. You can think up an excuse for Haley between now and then."

Dude had no choice and he knew it. Reluctantly he said, "Okay, Tony, you win. But just make sure the other twenty-two places are full."

"I knew you would see things my way. One more thing, Mr. Brennan," Conforti said, smiling now as he pulled an envelope from his pocket and handed it to the ward leader. "That is a ten-grand campaign contribution from an anonymous citizen."

Dude pocketed the envelope without bothering to examine its contents, and slid out of the booth.

"Good-bye, Mr. Brennan. Call me Monday at your convenience."

Riordan met his boss at the door and they headed for the car.

"Mike, what are the rumors about Lynn and Jack Sullivan? I never paid any attention to them before, but now I'm curious as hell about that pair." The big man thought the question over as he held open the door for Dude, then when they were both seated in the car, Mike said, "Far as I know Jack hasn't had a job in almost a year. He's supposed to be a pretty fair draftsman so it doesn't seem right letting his wife support him all these months."

"What does he do all day?" Dude asked.

"I don't know. I did see him once or twice out at the track and once at 'Pete' Peterson's book," Mike replied.

"That's interesting. See if you can find out if he's in hock to any one of the books. Especially Pete's book."

"Check," Mike said as he started the Packard. Dude was silent on the long ride back to the ward headquarters.

He had to know before Monday morning how Conforti got his oily hands on that confidential plan of Whalen's. Mike wheeled the car to the curb in front of the office. Dude hurried out of it, saying, "I'll be right back and then we're going downtown."

When he entered the office, Bea handed him a stack of papers and said, "This place has been a madhouse since you left. The telephone hasn't stopped ringing, and look at those telegrams. There's even one there from Governor Osborne."

"Thanks, Princess. Has Frank Quinncannon called yet?"

"Not so far," she replied.

Dude frowned. Then he said, "Do me a favor, angel. Call Lynn Sullivan and tell her to meet me at the Randolph Corners Inn in fifteen minutes. Tell her it's urgent. I won't be back for the rest of the day."

As he started out of the office she called after him. "Anywhere I can reach you after your meeting with Lynn?"

"No," he said over his shoulder. "I don't want to be reached."

Ten minutes later the Packard came to a halt in front of the cocktail lounge. Before Dude stepped from the car he turned to Mike and said, "Go over to Pete's book and see what you can find out about Sully. I'll be with Lynn for a while, so you can take your time." He handed his chauffeur a fifty dollar bill and said, "Give this to Pete just in case he gets curious."

Mike nodded and tucked the bill under his hatband before asking, "Do you want me to tell Pete that the information is for you, or do you want me to leave your name out of it?"

"It's okay to tell him the information is for me."

When Dude walked into the restaurant, it took several seconds for his eyes to become accustomed to the dimness of the lounge. Then he spotted the platinum blonde sitting in a rear booth with a drink before her. He nodded to

the bartender on his way back and said, "Bring me a double martini on the rocks, Eddie."

"Coming up, Mr. Brennan."

When he slid into the booth beside Lynn, she smiled up at him and said, "Hi, handsome. I thought you would never get around to asking me out for a drink."

Dude was very serious when he said, "This is definitely not a social visit, honey. I need some information."

"Sure, Dude," she replied, looking startled.

"Tell me exactly how Captain Haley decided on the forty places to be raided on Monday and who has a list of them," Dude said, careful to keep his voice low.

Lynn looked at him for a moment, and then said, "It was in a conference the day before yesterday between the mayor and the captain. Captain Haley dictated the locations to me and I took them down in shorthand. The mayor didn't want a leak beforehand, so he asked me to type an original and two carbons at home instead of at the office. He gave the original to the captain yesterday morning and as far as I know the mayor still has the two carbons."

She paused and waited until Eddie served Dude his drink and departed. Then she continued. "You were to get one of the copies today, but I guess the mayor forgot to bring it along to lunch."

"No he didn't forget," Dude said glumly. "He just flat don't trust me any more."

"That's not so, Dude," she said softly. "He really thinks of you as he would his own son."

"If that were true, Lynn, I would have been included in that conference day before yesterday."

"I'm sure he had his reasons for not including you."

"You bet he did," Dude snapped sarcastically.

"You're wrong, Dude. You should hear the way he is always praising you."

Dude looked into her blue eyes for a long time, then asked, "What's happening between you and Jack?" Lynn now looked at him with renewed interest. There was a slight smile on her lips as she answered. "I thought everyone

knew. He's been on a gambling kick for over a year. Next week I'm having Burt Witt file for divorce for me."

"That bad, huh?"

"That bad."

"No way for reconciliation?"

"It's gone way beyond that."

"I'm sorry, honey."

"Know any available bachelors looking for a ready-made family?"

He winked at her and smiled. "Could be. I'm available and am usually fairly easy to talk into anything."

"Not you." She laughed. "You're a confirmed bachelor. You couldn't stand those kids of mine for more than ten minutes. I might try to talk you into an affair, though."

Now it was his turn to laugh. "That's the second offer I've had today."

"Bastard!" she said. And they both laughed.

It wasn't until they had finished their second drink that Mike arrived. He walked over to the booth and tipped his hat. "Mrs. Sullivan," he said, then to Dude: "I'll be at the bar when you're ready, chief." Dude nodded and said, "Be with you in a minute, Mike."

Dude left money for the drinks on the table. He kissed Lynn lightly on the forehead. "Thanks, honey, and if you ever need a shoulder to cry on, call me."

"That may be sooner than you think," she replied softly.

He winked again at her and left. As he passed through the bar he tapped Mike on the arm and said, "I've got to get home, shower and shave, change, and be at O'Keefe's by six."

When the two men were out on the street, Dude turned to Mike and asked, "What were you able to find out?"

"I think Sully is way in over his head," Mike said slowly. "According to Pete, from time to time Sully would run IOU's up at his book and when they reached the five grand mark they would be turned over personally to Conforti. Then Tony would pay Pete off in cash. Pete

says that at the moment he and Sully are even. The last bunch of markers went to Tony on Monday of this week."

"Good going, Mikel!" Dude said. He grinned. "Now I know where Conforti gets his information."

"You mean that Lynn gives it to Sully?" Mike asked, astonished.

"Possibly, but I don't think so. I think that when she brought work home from the office to type up, Sully would just help himself to whatever there was when Lynn wasn't looking."

"Jesus Christ!" Mike said, and whistled softly. "If Whalen ever finds out about this he'll have apoplexy!"

Dude and Mike were standing in the foyer of the funeral parlor beside a small table that held the guest book. Mike placed his huge hand on Dude's shoulder and said, "Why don't you sit down for a while, chief? You don't look so hot."

Dude shook his head and said, "I'm okay, Mike. Besides, I don't want to go back in there for a—" Dude stopped in midsentence: his father was walking toward him. "Look Mike—it's him."

Mike looked at the gaunt man entering, then he tightened his hand on Dude's shoulder and said quietly, "You can't raise a ruckus in here. Not with your mother in the next room."

"Shut up!" Dude said savagely, and shook Mike's hand off.

"Hello, son," Paddy said as he stood in front of Dude. He was a pale shabby figure in rumpled clothes.

"Don't call me son, you goddamn stewbum!"

Paddy lowered his eyes, and nodded. Then he tried once more to speak to his son. "You'll never know how sorry I've been for what I did to you and your mother. If you want me to leave, I will."

Dude stared at his father for a long time. He could see the sadness and despair in his eyes. He felt guilty too: the guilt about his mother must be shared by both.

In a low voice, he said, "I've hated you for so long, Pa.

But now. . . . I don't know. I guess I've hated you too long. What happened happened." He hesitated then said, "Let's go in together, Pa."

Paddy could not speak, and tears filled his eyes. He grasped his son hard by the shoulders. Dude could feel a hard lump in his throat and said hoarsely, "I'm glad you're here, Pa."

They walked into the large room, Dude gently holding his father's arm. As they approached the casket, Dude could feel his father begin to tremble. They looked at the dead woman, so waxlike and motionless. Wife to one. Mother to the other. They both knelt in front of the coffin and made the sign of the cross.

A young priest said, "Father Devlin will be here in a little while for the saying of the Rosary."

In the next half hour the room became crowded, and Dude was renewing old acquaintanceships, and introducing his father to his many political friends. Later they broke away from a small group of their former neighbors, people they hadn't seen in years, and Dude took his father aside. "I have an opening in the building inspector's office and I want you to take it."

Paddy looked fondly at his son and said, "I'm doing okay, really. Besides, it wouldn't look right, son."

"The hell with how it looks. You're going to take the job and that's all there is to it!"

"We'll talk about it on Monday, Dude."

There was an increased murmur of voices in the vestibule. Mayor Whalen and Father Devlin had arrived at the same time. Together they walked directly to the casket: both knelt and said a brief prayer. When they had finished they walked to where Dude and his father were standing. The old priest was smiling. He placed a hand on each of their shoulders and said, "I'm happy to see both of you together again."

Dude introduced his father to the mayor, and after a few moments of uncomfortable silence the mayor said, "Could I speak to you for a moment, Dude?"

"Sure, Your Honor. Let's step outside for a smoke."

Once outside, Whalen steered them toward his limousine and said, "Let's sit in my car." When they were seated in the car Whalen removed an envelope from his pocket and handed it to Dude. "Here is the list of the locations that Captain Haley has scheduled for Monday's crack-down. I forgot to bring it with me at lunch today." Dude remained silent as he took the envelope and placed it in his own pocket. "Let's hope that the captain is successful in his endeavors," said the mayor.

"No reason he shouldn't be," Dude said mildly. "I'd better be getting back inside before the Rosary service starts. Are you coming?"

"I'm sorry but I have an appointment downtown in less than thirty minutes. However, I'll be at the Mass in the morning."

Dude nodded and got out of the car. "See you tomorrow, then."

When he reentered the funeral home the old priest had already started intoning the monotonous prayers of the Rosary. Dude noticed that the crowd had thinned out quite a bit and thought ruefully, Hypocritical bastards can't even spend fifteen minutes on their knees. He knelt down in the rear of the chapel, but did not speak the words of the prayers with the others. He kept his eyes on the door watching for any latecomers. He saw Lynn and Jack Sullivan enter and kneel down just inside the door. Dude studied them intently. Both were saying the prayers aloud. Lynn fingered a white rosary. Sully just fidgeted with his fountain pen. Which one? Dude asked himself. Maybe they are both in it together? He didn't relish the idea that Lynn could be a party to the peddling of the mayor's secrets. But it was in the realm of possibility that she unwittingly gave the information to her husband when she brought work home from the office. In any event, Dude knew that he now had an out. When the Monday raids proved unsuccessful he would directly accuse Sully and unfortunately indirectly accuse Lynn. There was no longer any question in his mind. Conforti had a direct pipeline into the mayor's office.

The old priest finished the saying of the Rosary and was talking to the senior Brennan when Dude broke into their conversation. He stared directly at the priest and said, "Pa is going to go to work for the city next week. I have a job for him in the building department."

Paddy was about to say something when the Sullivans joined them. After Dude made the introductions, the old priest, making no attempt to disguise his dislike for Dude, excused himself and left. While the four were making small talk Dude saw Detective Lieutenant Quinncannon enter the chapel. Jack Sullivan saw him, too, and suddenly looked quite uncomfortable: he hurried Lynn out.

Frank Quinncannon walked up to Dude, who said, "Frank, this is my dad. Pa, this is Frank Quinncannon. He's a detective on the narcotics squad, and my best friend."

"Glad to know you, Mr. Brennan," Frank said warmly.

"My pleasure, Mr. Quinncannon." Paddy smiled.

"Call me Frank," the detective said, and as Iron Mike approached the group he said, "Hello, Mike."

"Frank." Mike nodded.

Dude snapped his fingers and said, "For crying out loud, Pa. I've never introduced you to Mike. He's my confident, chauffeur, bodyguard, friend, and anything else you can think of."

"Nice to know you Mike," Paddy said as they shook hands.

"What's with Sully?" Frank asked Dude. "The way he and Lynn ducked out of here you'd think that I had leprosy or something."

"I think he's got a guilty conscience," Dude replied.

"What about?"

"I'll tell you about it some time."

The chapel was empty now except for the four men. "Ready to go, chief?" Mike asked politely. Dude turned to the narcotics officer and asked, "Can you give me a lift, Frank? I want Mike to take Pa home."

Dude and the detective rode in silence for several blocks before either spoke. "I got your message, Dude, but by the time I got a chance to return your call Bea said you had already left for the day. What's up, pal?"

"What do you know about Rudy Karwowski?" Dude asked.

"Small-time peddler," Frank responded, shrugging his shoulders. "Never could catch him with anything. I've heard that Conforti is going to promote him, so we've started having him tailed again."

Dude reached into his pocket, withdrew an envelope, and began to finger it absently. "I want him nailed, Frank, and I mean nailed. At least a quarter pound of morphine in his possession. Here's five grand, let me know when he's arrested."

Quinnecannon took the envelope. He was silent until they pulled up at Dude's hotel. "Conforti won't like this. He'll know goddamn well it's a setup and that you're behind it. You sure you want to live that dangerous?"

"This is a personal thing, Frank. Don't worry about Tony Conforti, I can handle him."

"Oh, I'm not worried Dude, you're the guy that has to be worried." Dude shrugged. The detective said, "We'll have him before Monday. I'll call you."

"Thanks, Frank." Dude lit a cigarette and sat quietly smoking for a moment. "I wouldn't mind hearing that he resisted arrest and had to be roughed up a bit."

The policeman laughed. "Damn! You *do* like to live dangerous."

The two men said good night, and Dude stepped out and stood at the curb and watched till the taillights of the car disappeared into the night, then went up to his apartment.

Chapter 3

It had rained again during the night. The gray Saturday morning was a welcome relief from the past three weeks of oppressive summer heat and humidity.

As Dude walked the short distance from his hotel to his storefront office, he looked at the deteriorating neighborhood and began to feel depressed. After the election, he thought, I think I'll move into the Lake Shore Drive apartment and just keep this apartment for appearances. It's stupid to live in this slum when I don't have to.

When he walked into the office he was surprised to see Bea busily typing. Mike was sitting at Dude's desk with his feet propped up on it. When he saw his boss he jumped up and said, rather sheepishly, "Oops, sorry, chief."

Dude just grinned and playfully feinted a punch to the huge man's torso. He then turned to Bea. "What are you doing here today, Princess? Saturday is not a work day around here."

She smiled up at him and replied, "I thought I would hitch a ride out to the cemetery and back with Mike. And while I'm here I'm making a list of the people who sent telegrams so we can send them thank you cards."

"I don't know what I'd do without you," he said sincerely.

He sat down and called the Lake Shore Drive number. While he was waiting for the connection to be completed, he thought how grateful he was that Maude Fallon was willing to take a leave of absence from the probation

department to take care of Jackie's little girl, Kimmie, while Jackie was going to be at the convalescent home. Bill Meyers, the chief, had said that with the accumulated leave and overtime hours Maude had piled up over the past few years she would receive her full paycheck every two weeks all the way through Christmas if necessary.

"Maude? Dude. How is everything going?"

"Fine, Dude." Maude had a deep rich voice. "This little girl is just an angel. She has the manners of a grownup and is as sweet as can be. I'm sorry I couldn't get over to the funeral, but you know it's just out of the question. How is Jackie making out?"

"I haven't called out there yet today," Dude replied. "If it's all right with Dr. Kessell, it might be possible for the three of us to go out and visit her tomorrow."

"Dude, she's going to be a mighty sick girl for the next several days and I don't think it would be good for Kimmie to see her just yet."

"I guess you're right. Is there anything you need?"

"Not a thing. Just a minute, Dude, Kimmie wants to say hello."

"Hi, Dude," the little voice said, "we're going to the zoo today."

"Hi, pumpkin. You sound pretty bouncy. Tell your Aunt Maude that if both of you are good I'll be by later on and take you both out to dinner."

"Goody. I got to go to the bathroom, good-bye." Dude was still laughing when Maude came in on the line.

"I guess that's right to the point." She laughed.

"I guess so." Then in a more serious tone—"I'll be by around five-thirty or six to take you two to dinner."

"See you then," she said and broke the connection.

Dude glanced at Bea. She showed no sign that she had listened, but he knew that she had, and he also sensed her disapproval. Well, he thought, it's just something that she's going to have to live with. He sighed audibly and said, to no one in particular, "We had better be leaving."

Dude waited for Bea to remove the paper from her typewriter and put the cover on the machine. When she

finished she nodded at Dude and said, "I'm ready." Dude held the door for her, snapped the automatic lock on the office door, and stepped out onto the sidewalk. They were all silent on the way to the funeral home.

Dude and Bea were met at the door of the funeral parlor by Paddy Brennan. Dude had the uneasy feeling that his father had aged since the previous evening. Maybe it's just the puffiness around his eyes, he thought. Dude introduced Bea. As they all walked inside, Paddy said, "Did you know that Archbishop McKenna is going to say a Solemn High Requiem Mass for Mary?"

"Yeah, Pa. She sure would have been pleased. I can't recall the last time I saw a Solemn High Requiem. Certainly not since the years I was an altar boy."

The undertaker came to Dude. "I think we should start. We have only fifteen minutes before we must be at the church."

Walking into the large room Dude saw that all the floral pieces had been taken out. Some were in the flower cars; some of the better arrangements had been sent on ahead to the church to decorate the altar. There were only a few people sitting there, among the many folding chairs: mostly old neighbors.

O'Keefe ushered them up to the front and off to the right of the casket where there were several comfortable chairs reserved for the family. Bea moved toward the non-family mourners but Dude held her hand firmly and said, "Stay with me, Princess."

He had begun to realize just how much a part of his life she had become. He was supposed to be in love with Jackie, yet it was Bea that he wanted with him now.

When they were seated, Bea turned to Paddy and said softly, "I hope you don't mind, Mr. Brennan." Paddy smiled, replying, "I'm proud to have you here, darlin', and call me Paddy."

The young Father O'Brien cleared his throat and made the sign of the cross with his right hand. "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," he intoned in his rich tenor voice. Everyone answered,

"Amen." This time Dude joined in voicing the few prayers aloud. The priest concluded with: "May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace." The "Amen" again was answered in unison.

The priest then extended his hand to Paddy. "It's time," he said quietly. For a moment Dude was fearful that his father would break down, but the older man stood erect and led the procession of mourners past the open casket for the last time. Dude paused momentarily and looked down at his mother. Unconsciously he squeezed Bea's hand very tightly. She thought, Oh God, please let him love me. I know he needs me.

O'Keefe briskly ushered the trio to the waiting limousine parked immediately behind the hearse. Again Bea made a brief attempt to break away and join Mike. But Dude's grip on her hand stopped her. He must love me a little, she thought.

Neither Dude nor his father were prepared for the reception awaiting them at the church. When their car glided to a halt at the steps of the cathedral-like structure they saw, for the first time, the six pallbearers. Dude was moved by the selection. On the right side was Mayor Whalen himself. Behind him was County Board President Joe Simons and in the rear was Iron Mike. On the left side was the city purchaser, Ward Donohue, behind him Police Commissioner Chauncey 'Bud' O'Connell, and the sixth man was Judge Emmett Gorman.

Dude glanced at the throng of people lining both sides of the steps. He saw many familiar faces, but most he had never seen before. He spotted Jack Hughes of the *Examiner* and his cameraman, and a few other newspaper reporters whose names he had forgotten. The all-powerful mayor had, as usual, taken command. It's no wonder, Dude thought, that the old boy gets the awe and respect of everyone who works for him.

At the head of the stairs stood the tall, gaunt Archbishop McKenna, with the regal crosier in his left hand. On his left, serving in the role of deacon for the Mass

was Father Devlin. To the right of the archbishop was Father O'Brien who would serve as subdeacon. In front of the archbishop were two small altar boys. One carried a heavy gold censer smoking with incense, swinging it gently from side to side on its gold chains. The other boy held a small golden container filled with holy water and the long-handled shakerlike dispenser. A third altar boy, carrying the crucifix on its long pole, had just come from the inside of the church and said politely, "Pardon me, Your Excellency." The archbishop stepped aside so the boy could take his place in front of the group.

When pallbearers had gently set the casket on the little cart, they stepped back a few feet, the Archbishop stepped forward, and the altar boy with the vessel of holy water held it up to him. The tall man grasped the dispenser and the boy with the crucifix slowly circled the casket. Father Devlin and Father O'Brien had each taken hold of the heavy cope draped around the archbishop and were holding it aside so he could freely move his arms while sprinkling the casket with holy water and shaking the censer over it. He began chanting the Latin blessing.

When the procession had completely circled the casket, all were facing the altar. The pallbearers stepped up and took their positions, and the boy holding the crucifix led them to the foot of the altar where four candles in large standards were arranged at each corner of the coffin.

The gates at the center of the altar railing were open and the group walked through.

The archbishop looked slightly to his left, then to his right, then ascended the three steps and bent to kiss the altar stone, then, turning to the congregation, blessed them with the sign of the cross. He walked down and turned again to face the altar. He made the sign of the cross again, intoning the words in Latin. He paused, then in his deep baritone voice said, "*Et introibo ad altare dei.*"

The Mass had begun.

It had been many years since Dude had been to church. The ritual brought back memories of his youth when he

had been happy and proud participating in the Mass. He was surprised to find that he still remembered the Latin prayers and their English counterparts.

During the long service the two Brennans thought of Mary Frances Brennan. Each reflected on his own guilt for the hard and lonely years she had endured. Hardest of all to accept was the fact that through all those years she had believed in the goodness that she knew was in each of them, but each had deserted her.

Finally the Mass was over. At the doorway the pallbearers took up their positions, waited for the nod from O'Keefe, then together lifted their burden and carried it to the open door of the hearse.

Dude did not like it when some of the newspaper photographers began snapping pictures. He knew they were not interested in the death of his mother, but only that the mayor and a group of his most powerful aides had turned out for this special occasion.

O'Keefe hurriedly escorted Paddy, Dude and Bea to their car, then scooted off to direct the other participants who had began milling about the hearse. When everyone had been properly directed to their places in the cortege, O'Keefe returned to the family car and looked in the window. "We'll start as soon as Father Devlin has changed," he said. The elder Brennan said, "Thank you, John. You've done a splendid job." The mortician looked pleased.

Several minutes passed before the column got under way and started on the long journey to Woodbine Cemetery near Chicago's sprawling West Side.

Paddy noticed that his son was still holding the hand of this lovely girl and wondered idly if there was more to their relationship than that of employer and employee. Curiosity got the better of him. "Pretty as you are darlin', how is it that you're not married and raisin' a family?"

Dude was irritated and spoke before Bea could reply. "For Christ's sake, Pa!"

"I suppose I just haven't met the right man yet."

Paddy felt somewhat uneasy at having asked such a

personal question and tried to correct his mistake. "I didn't mean to be personal, darlin', but the Irish always did have an elegant way of putting their feet in their mouths."

She laughed, saying, "Don't be silly, Mr. Brennan, you can ask anything you like."

Dude didn't like the direction in which the conversation was heading and decided to put it to a halt. "By the way, Princess, on Monday I'll need the standard patronage letter to Danny Maher and a copy to the building department. Pa is going to be taking over Karwowski's old job."

"Now, Dude," the elder Brennan protested.

Dude cut him off sharply. "It's been decided, Pa; let's not hear any more about it."

They rode for several blocks in silence before Paddy ventured to ask, "Does this now make me a precinct captain?"

Dude laughed at his father's political naïveté. "Hell, no," he chuckled. "Billy Warren is the assistant captain of the thirty-first precinct, the precinct you'll be working in. He'll be promoted to captain and you'll be his assistant. Pay attention to him. He'll teach you how to be a good precinct captain. He'll show you how to deliver ninety-nine percent of the vote on election day."

Paddy had never had anything to do with politicians in any capacity, and now started to wish this job had never come up in the first place. He had a premonition that he was sealing his own fate and placing it in the hands of this stranger, his son, and that he would probably rue the day he had consented.

By the time the first car drove through the cemetery gates the sun was out, and the slow procession threaded its way down the quiet, narrow, verdant lanes and came to a stop near a tree-shaded knoll. They walked up the short incline to a row of folding chairs under a huge canopy.

After the family had been seated, O'Keefe walked to the grave and pressed a button: there was a soft whirring noise as the casket was slowly lowered into the grave.

The eulogy that Father Devlin gave was a meaningless

hodgepodge of words to Dude's ears. He could only stare at the grave. For the first time, he was struck by the awful finality: he would never again see his mother or hear her gentle voice. Tears flowed openly down his cheeks. "My God," he whispered. "What have I done to my mother?" Bea took his hand and held it tightly. If I could only take away some of the pain and agony you feel, she thought.

The priest had gone through the ritual of sprinkling the casket with the holy water and blessing it with the censer and was reading from a small prayer book before Dude regained some control over himself. He looked at his father and saw how strangely rigid he was, staring straight ahead, dry-eyed and silent.

Father Devlin reached down and picked up some of the freshly turned earth, and, lightly dropping it onto the casket, said, "Earth to earth. . . . Ashes to ashes. . . . Dust to dust," and closed the book. He went to Dude and Paddy and said, "May God bless you both." The three men shook hands and slowly walked back to the waiting limousines.

When they reached the car Paddy looked sadly at his son and said, "If it's all right with you, Dude, I would appreciate it if you would have Mike drive me home. I would like to be alone now." Dude eyed him closely for any sign that his despair might bring him to the brink of doing something foolish. "I'd rather you came back to my place. At least for a while." "Not now," his father said, shaking his head. Dude saw that further urging would be futile. He beckoned to Mike, who was nearby talking to the funeral director. Mike hurried over.

Dude said softly, "Take Pa home, Mike. Try to stay with him. I think he may have some stupid notions on his mind." Mike immediately understood.

While they were riding back in O'Keefe's limousine, Dude became increasingly aware of Bea's presence and was somewhat self-conscious to be holding her hand again. He tried to analyze his feeling for her, but felt blank. He thought he should say something, so he said softly, "Thanks for staying with me, Princess."

She turned her body toward him. Suddenly she was in his arms, burying her face in his shoulder. Her tears were unashamed and she whispered, "Dude, I love you so much. . . . So much. Can't you love me just a little?"

He held her close and ran his hand through her honey-blond hair, stroking it lightly. "I guess I do, Princess. I guess that I do. God knows I needed you today more than I've ever needed anyone."

"I knew it!" she said happily between sobs. "I knew it."

They were still in each other's arms when the chauffeur pulled up to the hotel. He looked in the rear-view mirror and waited until the couple parted before asking, "Is *this* the place, sir?" Dude smiled, knowing that the man had no idea of the beautiful apartment that was hidden behind that aged façade. Borrowing Mike's favorite expression, Dude said, "Check." Then he handed the driver a five dollar bill, and helped Bea out of the car.

Artie, the old elevator operator, informed Dude on their quick trip to the second floor that Mr. Conforti had sent a caterer over with food and liquor and that he had taken the liberty of putting it in the apartment a little less than an hour before. Dude just scowled, and as the pair got off the elevator, he slipped some money into the old man's shirt pocket. "Thanks for always keeping an eye on the old homestead for me, Artie."

"You know me, Dude," the old man said as he closed the elevator door behind them.

Dude fished his key out of his vest pocket and opened the door. There was a cool breeze filling the apartment and he was glad that they had come back alone. Perhaps he had been slightly rude to the mayor and the others, but he just hadn't felt like being with them. He just wanted to be alone with Bea.

Dude took off his jacket and vest before he entered the living room. Bea walked over to him, stood on tiptoe and kissed him on the cheek. "Let me fix you something to eat. I know you haven't had a thing today."

He yawned. "I'm not really hungry. I just want to stretch out on the couch for a few minutes."

"You'll do no such thing," she said as she unloosened his tie and started unbuttoning his shirt. "If you stretch out anywhere it's going to be in your bed. That's what beds are for."

"That's not all they're for," he said, stifling another yawn.

"Come on now. Which way is the bedroom?"

He grinned and said, "Are you sure you really want to know?"

"That will be enough of that!" she said sternly.

When they reached the bedroom Bea drew back the covers and fluffed up the pillows and Dude sat on the edge of the bed.

"You lie down for a while and I'll get you a sandwich and a cup of coffee." Instead of answering he kissed the tip of his left forefinger and placed it gently against her cool lips.

When he awoke it was dark. There was just enough light in the room from the street below for him to see clearly. A tray with two sandwiches and a cold cup of coffee was on the table beside him. Across the room Bea was curled up, asleep in the big armchair, her hands folded childlike under her chin. He felt a wave of tenderness for her.

He reached for a cigarette from the package on the table, but before he could strike a match he saw Bea stir in the chair.

"I'm awake," she said sleepily. "Let me make you a fresh cup of coffee."

"Not yet, Princess," he said in a deep husky voice. "Would you come over and sit beside me for a few minutes?"

Obediently she came and perched on the edge of the bed. She took his hand between hers. "I know what you are going to say, Dude," she whispered. "But I also know what a turmoil you are in after today. I want so badly to hear all of the things you want to say to me, but it wouldn't be fair to let you say them now and regret having said them in the morning."

She slowly began to unbutton her blouse. "I don't want you to say a word. Not one word. That way there will be no regrets."

Before he realized it she was undressed and in his arms. He managed to whisper in her ear, "I do love you, Princess."

"Don't say it!" she said fiercely. Then her lips sought out his and her warm slender body became alive beneath his touch.

Outside the rain began to fall once more.

Beatrice Elizabeth Hoke was an only child, born late in life to Kurt and Alice Hoke, and grew up in an atmosphere of love and affection.

Bea's father, a butcher by trade, had emigrated to America when he was thirty-four. Although he was happy in his native Frankfort, he wanted to see America. Everyone he had known who had gone to the United States sent back glowing letters.

He came directly to Chicago, the city dubbed the meat packer of the world, and within a year he had learned the language and was saving every penny he could for a shop of his own.

When he had finally accumulated enough money for a down payment on a small shop on the Near West Side, he found to his dismay that in order to go into business, he would have to pay tribute to the alderman of that ward.

Ignoring the political courtesies expected of him he opened the shop anyway. Within the first month he was visited by every inspector employed by the city and charged with every violation imaginable. When the board of health finally threatened to close him down he knew he had been defeated. He reluctantly called and made an appointment with the alderman.

His dislike and distrust for the Irish vanished when he walked into the ward headquarters on West Madison Street and for the first time met Alice Hanrahan, the alderman's sister. For both of them it was love at first sight and before the year was out they were married.

It was in their second year of marriage that Bea was born. By this time the shop had prospered. Kurt was able to make a down payment on a home on the North Side, where Bea had a happy childhood. She was beautiful and intelligent, and when she finished high school, she went on to college and studied drama. She hoped to go on the stage. While she was in her third year at college, her mother and father took a long-overdue vacation. They were motoring through Canada when they were caught in an avalanche; both were killed.

Bea dropped out of school, sold the butcher shop, and paid off the mortgage on the house. She gave up the idea of a theatrical career, and took a job as a stenographer in one of the large brokerage firms on LaSalle Street. A year later she sold the house and took an apartment on Greenview Avenue.

She had been working in the brokerage office almost three years when her aging alderman uncle lost the services of his secretary and asked Bea to help him out. She took a leave of absence and on the following Monday walked into the storefront office on West Madison Street.

Cocky, handsome Dude Brennan sat at the alderman's desk, with his feet propped up on it. When he smiled up at her her heart skipped a beat: she fell in love with him.

After her uncle died she stayed on to become Dude's secretary. Although they went out regularly, Dude had never once tried to make love to her. However, she was certain that one day he would eventually ask her to marry him. To a degree she was content. That is until the afternoon when Jackie first walked into the office.

Quietly she rose from his bed, dressed, and walked out into the living room. She sat down at Dude's desk and wrote a brief note. She then placed it on the night table in the bedroom, leaned over and kissed the sleeping Dude lightly on the forehead, then let herself out of the apartment.

It was raining hard when she stepped out onto the sidewalk.

Chapter 4

Dude awoke with a start, and it took him several seconds to orient himself. It was light in the apartment now. The tray of untouched sandwiches and coffee was gone from the table, but a note was propped next to the lamp. He tapped the letter against his thumbnail debating on whether to read it then or take a shower first, for he thought he knew what it would say. He lit a cigarette, took five puffs, and then he opened the letter.

Darling,

I didn't want to awaken you when I left because as I said, there should be no regrets.

Mike called late yesterday afternoon and I told him to call you around ten this morning. I also took the liberty of calling Maude Fallon and telling her you wouldn't be by to take her and little Kim to dinner, that it would be better that you rested. I also told her you would call her this morning.

I have decided that I can't go on this way any longer. I'm tearing myself to pieces little by little each day and it's no good for either one of us.

Before I go home I am going to clean out my desk at the office. The office key will be in the top right-hand drawer of my desk and my letter of resignation will be in the typewriter.

I'm sorry I can't give you two weeks' notice, but it's just not possible. Please don't think too harshly

of me for it, and please don't call me, it will only make things more difficult.

I will always love you.

Bea

He replaced the note on the table. The cigarette had gone out in the ashtray and he lit a fresh one. "As if I haven't got enough trouble, now this," he said aloud, his voice sounding hollow to him in the stillness of the empty apartment.

While he showered and shaved, he reviewed in his mind the events of the previous day and night. He put on a pair of gray slacks, a light-blue shirt, and a gray sweater. He thought, I've been trying to kid myself far too long. I've known how much in love with me she's been, and was trying to sell myself on the idea that it was just a game and she wasn't really serious at all. Well, the game is over and it appears I've lost.

He stepped out into the hall and picked up the Sunday morning papers, then walked back into the living room and sat down on the couch. With his feet up on the coffee table, he tried for over an hour to concentrate on reading the papers and finally gave up on it. He reached for the phone on the end table and called Bea. After the phone rang twenty-three times in his ear without an answer, he hung up. "She's there," he said aloud, then laughed. "Jesus Christ, here I am sitting around talking to myself." But there was no humor in his laugh.

He was on his fifth cigarette when the phone rang at ten.

"Morning, chief. How you feelin'?" It was Mike.

"Lousy. I'm going bats here. How would you like to drop over and pick me up and we'll take a ride in the country?" Dude asked.

"Sure thing. I'll be over in about ten minutes. Want me to bring you anything?" Dude looked at his near-empty package of cigarettes then said, "Yeah, glad you reminded me. I'm running out of butts. Pick up a carton for me, will you?"

Dude went into the kitchen and put on a pot of coffee, and he set out two cups and saucers, the sugar bowl and the creamer on a small silver tray. The coffee was just about ready when he heard the knock at the door. Mike was there holding up the carton of cigarettes. The big man walked in; Dude handed him two silver dollars to pay for the smokes.

"How about some coffee, buddy?" Dude asked cheerfully.

"Sounds good," Mike replied, easing himself down on the sofa.

From the kitchen, Dude called, "How long have we known each other Mike?"

"I don't know. Ten, maybe twelve years."

Dude walked in with the pot, and poured the coffee. "You never say much Mike, but I guess you know me better than any other human being. Tell me—what the hell is the matter with me?"

He said slowly, "Not a thing, Dude. You've always been aces with me."

"Why is it that I always manage to screw everything up?"

"I don't follow you, chief."

"Bea has left me."

"She what?"

Dude handed him the note Bea had left. Mike took a long time to read it. When he finished, he folded it carefully and handed it back to Dude. "So?"

"What do you mean 'so'?" Dude shot back. "Don't you understand? She's gone and won't be coming back."

"Well?" Mike said quietly. "Just what did you expect, Dude? That girl has been eating her heart out over you for the past four years. Frankly I'm surprised she didn't do this long, long ago."

"We were always kidding," Dude said lamely. "I never really thought she was serious."

"Cut it, Dude; you don't have to pretend with me."

"Okay, okay. So I knew. What do I do now?"

"It strictly depends on what you want. You can't have your cake and eat it too."

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"Jackie."

"Tell it straight, Mike—what do you really think of the whole goddamned thing?"

"No punches pulled?"

"All the way."

"What you really want is the best of two worlds and you just found out the hard way that you can't have it like that. You've changed one hell of a lot since you started going ga-ga over that hustler. Personally, I think you're nuts. Everyone in this whole city is laughing behind your back. Everyone except me, and the only reason I'm not laughing is because I don't think it's funny at all. I think it's sad. Even the mayor knows that you're keeping her, and probably already knows that you're footing the bill so she can take the cure. I'll admit she is the most beautiful woman I ever saw, but that's not enough to make you forget what she is and has been." Mike said heavily, "On the other hand, there's Bea. Now ask yourself this: Why wasn't it Jackie that was with you all day yesterday instead of Bea? And don't give me any crap about the hospital because we both know that another day more or less wouldn't have made any difference. Think about it, Dude. Think hard. Your mother died, and then your old man suddenly showed up after all these years, and it was Bea you wanted to share your grief with. So I'd say, if you can break the spell Jackie has over you, do it. And do it fast. Then, if it's not too late, go after Bea. Go down on your knees if you have to because if you don't you'll regret it until the day you die."

The longer Mike talked, the more fascinated Dude became. In all the years, Dude could not recall any time when Mike had spoken more than twenty words at one time. When Mike finished, he said, "Well, I asked for it, and by God I certainly got it. Tell me, Mike, isn't it possible to be in love with two women at the same time?"

"You're at it again with the pretending, Dude. You know that one way or another you have to make a decision."

"You think Jackie is taking me for a sucker, don't you?"

"Yep."

"And I sure need Bea desperately in the office, especially now! The election's only a few weeks away."

"She knows it too, chief." Mike said and grinned for the first time.

"What do you mean?"

"Jeez! You really can't see the forest for the trees. Five will get you ten that after she thinks things over, come Monday morning, you'll see her lovely face over that typewriter of hers."

"Do you honestly think so, Mike?"

"Y'know, the more I talk to you, the less I think you know about women. She'll be back Dude, but don't let that fool you. It will be loyalty only that will bring her back and then only up to election day. So you can figure on only a few weeks, because after that when she leaves it will be for good."

"When I had lunch with Hizzoner on Friday, I told him that after Jackie came out of the hospital I was going to break it off with her permanently."

Mike laughed. "Knowing you chum, I can figure the only reason you said it was because he gave you an ass-chewing about her."

"I will not walk out on Jackie now. After she is on her feet again, then is when I'll know one way or another, Mike."

"Careful, chief. Don't forget that she's not apt to take kindly to being dumped. Especially when she'd have to go back to another cold-water flat on Racine Avenue. She stands to lose a lot and that cookie is not going to give in without a fight, and from where I stand I'd make book that she could fight plenty dirty."

Dude splashed more coffee into their cups before he asked, "How long have you had this deep dislike for her, Mike?"

"It's not so much that I dislike her, Dude, it's that I like you. You've been the best friend I ever had and I can see that she's only trouble."

"Maybe you're right. I just don't know yet. I want you to drive me out to see her this afternoon. I have to see her, talk to her. I've got to know how I feel about her."

Dude picked up the tray with the now-empty cups and took it back to the kitchen. "If we leave now, we can be out there by one o'clock. You ready?"

"Any time you are," Mike answered.

Dude came to the kitchen doorway wiping his hands on a towel. He looked at the huge man sitting on the sofa, and said, "Thanks for the dressing down, Mike. I guess I needed someone to tell me all the things you said."

Mike looked a little embarrassed. "I've been wanting to tell you how I felt about everything, but I figured you didn't want my advice."

"Well, now you know," Dude said as he tossed the towel over the back of the nearest chair. "Let's get started."

Dude had never seen Dr. Kessell's sanatorium and was pleasantly surprised when they drove up the winding driveway. It was a beautiful day, sunny and cloudless, and the sanatorium grounds seemed more like a country club than a hospital. People sat in lawn chairs, and there were only a few nurses, prim and starched in blue-and-white uniforms.

Mike parked the Packard near the low, white stucco building. "If I ever go off my trolley, ship me out here to get my marbles back."

"How many times do I have to tell you this isn't a nut-house? It's a sanatorium."

"Says you! If it's all the same with you I'd rather sit here in the car. When I was here the other day I didn't care for the way some of those nurses were eying me up. You know, like I belonged in here."

Dude walked into the immaculate reception room, and thought the place had the air of a fancy Miami Beach hotel. Just as damn expensive too, he thought.

He gave the receptionist his name: after a few seconds she said, "You may go right in, Mr. Brennan. Second door on your right." Dr. Kessell was standing behind his desk when Dude walked into the office. Ben Kessell hadn't changed since Dude had seen him, some two or three years before. He was short, slim and scholarly looking, and had a shock of snow-white hair and a white goatee. Dude guessed his age at somewhere in his late sixties.

The doctor removed his glasses and reached over to shake the outstretched hand. "How nice to see you again, Dude. Sit down, sit down. I've just been going over Miss Devereaux's chart. I thought you might be here today."

"I would have been out sooner Ben, but what with the funeral and all. . . ."

"I'm sorry about your mother, Dude. Did you get the Mass card I sent?"

"Yes," he lied. "Thanks for remembering."

"Well, now," The doctor said, replacing his glasses and picking up a chart. "I suppose you want to see the young lady as soon as possible, so let me fill you in on what we are doing for her. First of all, bear in mind that she is quite sick physically, even though we have her mildly sedated. She will have to be confined to her bed for the next few days. She's very weak. The medication she is currently receiving is called heroin and is supposed to do wonders for persons addicted to morphine."

The doctor smiled at Dude: "At this point she will need all the moral support you can give her. Tell her she looks good even though she may look fairly drained now. I know she is expecting to see you. Why don't you just go in and surprise her? Room six."

Nervously standing outside her room, Dude silently cursed the sweating of his palms. He wiped his hands on his trousers, took a deep breath, and pushed the door open.

The room was bright and cheerful. Except for the hospital bed, it could have been a bedroom in a fine hotel.

Jackie appeared to be sleeping and gave no sign that she had heard him enter. Dude looked down at her for a long time. She wore a pale-blue nightgown. Her slender hands were at her sides. The soft black hair had been neatly brushed, smooth against the white face. There was a trace of lipstick on the full perfectly formed lips.

He felt an overwhelming desire to kiss her. He bent and very lightly placed his lips on hers. She stirred slightly beneath his touch, she slowly opened her deep-brown eyes, and smiled. "Hi, Irish," she said, in that soft melodic voice Dude never tired of listening to.

"Hi, kitten, I'm sorry I woke you up," he said huskily.

"I'm not."

He sat down on the edge of the bed. She reached out and put her hands on each side of his face. This time he kissed her long and tenderly. When their lips parted he kissed her on her forehead.

"You smell good," he said softly.

She wrinkled her nose and replied, "That's because I'm a girl, and girls are supposed to smell good."

"And kind of a pretty one at that. In fact you don't look sick at all." Then he said, in all seriousness, "How do you feel, kitten?"

"Kind of rough around the edges, but considering everything it's not too bad. I feel so much better now that you are here."

They looked at each other for several minutes before either spoke. "Irish?"

"What, my love?"

"I wanted to be with you yesterday. I felt so badly that I wasn't there. In some small way I might have been able to comfort you. I bawled most of the day."

"I wish you had been, love. I know now that I will never be happy until you and I are together forever. I guess this is neither the time nor the place to ask you, but—will you marry me?"

Tears flooded her eyes and her lower lip began to tremble. "Are you sure, Irish?" she asked. "I mean after what I've done with my life?" Her eyes searched his face, and

the tears rolled down her cheeks. He drew her close, and he buried his face in her hair. He whispered, "Everything that has happened before this minute is the past, and we won't ever think of it again. Our lives are going to begin from this moment on. I love you Jackie, and I want you—only you. Will you have me?"

Her arms tightened about his neck and she cried. "Oh, yes, yes! I've prayed that you would want me. I'll marry you anytime, anyplace, or anywhere." She was talking and crying at the same time. "I've never been so happy in all my life." She kissed his lips, his cheeks, his eyes, his chin, saying "I love you" over and over.

They did not hear the nurse enter the room, until she cleared her throat twice in an effort to gain their attention, and said, "I hate to interrupt this little love scene, but it's pill time, Miss Devereaux."

The two parted, smiling up at the nurse. Both started to speak at the same time, then stopped and laughed.

The nurse poured fresh water into any empty glass on the night table and handed it to Jackie along with two pale-green capsules. "Down the hatch." Then she said, "Those capsules are going to make you sleepy in about twenty minutes. I'm afraid you will have to leave then, Mr. Brennan." Dude nodded, wondering idly how she knew who he was.

After the nurse left the room, Jackie smoothed her hair and straightened the rumpled bedcovers, saying, "I talked with Kimmie and Maude this morning and it sounds as though they have been having a ball. I don't think Kimmie misses me at all."

"Don't you believe it," Dude said. "I couldn't do it yesterday, but I'm going to take them to dinner today at the Oriental Gardens when I get back."

Jackie feigned a pout and said, "I wish I could go along too. You know, Kimmie simply adores you. For that matter, so do I."

He took her hand again, and asked, "Do you think Kimmie will like the idea of having me for a daddy?"

"You know she will."

"I think we ought to get married as soon as you get out of here."

"Whenever you say, Irish. I'm yours whenever you want me. Is it okay if I tell Maude? I'm so happy that I've just got to tell someone," she said and her tears began again.

Dude handed her his handkerchief. "I thought you were happy."

"I am."

He kissed her again and could taste the salty tears. "Love me, kitten?" he asked huskily.

"More than you will ever know, Irish."

This time the nurse knocked on the door before entering the room. Once inside she walked over to the window and closed the drapes. "I'm sorry, but you will have to leave now, Mr. Brennan."

Jackie protested. "I don't feel a bit sleepy."

"You will any minute now."

"I'll call you tomorrow kitten," Dude said as he rose to leave.

"Kiss me again before you go, Irish?" She asked in a small voice.

He leaned over and kissed her once more, more passionately than either one of them had intended. "I'd better leave before things get out of hand," he whispered.

As he walked out into the bright afternoon, Dude thought, I've made that decision Mike talked about and it isn't the one he expects.

As soon as he got in the car Mike took one look at him and knew he had made the choice: Dude saw his face change, and decided he had better have it out with Mike and clear the air. "I'm in love with her," Dude said almost defiantly.

"That's nice," Mike said dryly.

"I'm going to marry her."

"She's fifteen years younger than you."

"And Bea's nine years younger," he countered.

"You going to adopt the little girl?"

"Yes."

"Whalen will have a fit. When are you going to tell him?"

"Not until after we're married."

"When will that be?"

"As soon as Jackie is released from the hospital."

"Just about election time, huh?"

"Probably before."

"You're tossing your career away, chief, you know that, don't you?"

"That's what Whalen said."

They rode in silence for a while, then Mike said, "This is going to be quite a kick in the teeth to Bea. I think you ought to tell her as soon as possible before she finds it out from someone else. You owe her that much, Dude."

"I want you to promise me, Mike, that you won't say anything to her until I'm ready."

"She will never hear it from me, chum. I don't want to be around when you tell her either. I don't think I'd have the stomach for it."

It struck Dude like a blow. "Mike, can I ask you something very personal?"

"Sure," the big man said quietly.

"Are you in love with Bea?"

Dude saw his friend's fingers tighten around the steering wheel: the tendons in his wrists stood out, and his knuckles turned white. "I have been ever since I first saw her." There was a tone of utter defeat in his voice.

"Does she know, Mike?"

"She doesn't even know I'm alive," he said bitterly, then added, "It's best that way."

"Why?"

The huge man gave his boss a fierce glance before replying. "You're not blind. Take a good look, pal. I was born homely as a frog and the twelve years I spent in the ring finished it up good. Besides, I'm eight years older than you. What girl in her right mind would even give me a second look?"

"Bea thinks an awful lot of you, Mike. Why haven't you ever asked her out?" he asked lamely.

"Shove it!" Mike's voice was harsh.

"I'm sorry."

"I didn't mean to fly off the handle."

It was a little after four when they pulled up in front of the Royale. Neither got out. Mike left the engine running. They both lit cigarettes.

"What now, chief?"

"I'm going to take Maude and Kim out to dinner this evening, but I'll take a cab. I'll see you in the morning. Try and be at the office about eight-thirty in case Bea shows up. She doesn't have her key."

"You sure you won't be needing me any more today?"

"No, Mike. I shouldn't have bothered you on Sunday, anyway."

"We still friends, chief?"

"Always will be."

Dude stood at the curb as Mike drove off. Poor bastard, he thought. Life sure dealt him a rotten hand.

The telephone was ringing as he entered the apartment.

"It's Frank, Dude. Can we meet somewhere? Something has happened about your Polish friend."

Dude looked at his watch, then said, "Suppose I meet you at the bar in the Alton Hotel on St. James Place around five-fifteen? Trouble?"

"Not yet," the detective said gravely, "but it could turn out that way. See you in a little while."

Dude phoned the Lake Shore Drive apartment, and Kimmie answered. "Hello, this is Kimberly Devereaux."

"Hi, pumpkin. How about having supper with me?"

"Yes!" she squealed. "Can Aunt Maude come along too?"

"I think that can be arranged. Can I talk to her, honey?"

When Maude's cheerful voice came on the line, he said, "Maude, I hope you and Kimmie haven't eaten

yet. I was planning to take you two over to the Oriental Gardens."

"We're just about starving. What time should we be ready?"

Dude thought a moment, then said, "How about a quarter of six?"

"That will be just about right. We'll be waiting out front. Have you talked to Jackie today?"

"I saw her. Just got back. I'll tell you all about it."

He showered leisurely, and was putting on his shirt when the phone rang.

"Mr. Brennan, I am very disappointed in you." There was no mistaking the Sicilian's smooth sinister voice.

"Yeah, Tony?"

"You are meddling into things that are none of your affair, and placing me in an embarrassing situation. You will meet me at the usual place tomorrow afternoon at four o'clock."

"Can't do it. I'll be tied up then," Dude said stubbornly.

"You can just untie yourself, Brennan! I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. Be there!" The line went dead and Dude just stared at the mute instrument.

"Goddamn him!" he said savagely.

Frank Quinncannon was on his second bourbon and water when Dude joined him at the bar.

"And what cheerful news do you have for me?"

The policeman looked around the half-filled lounge and said, "Let's take a booth." They waited until the bartender served Dude his drink, then they moved to a secluded corner.

"Ed Dunne and I grabbed Karwowski out in front of Wrigley Field this afternoon. When we shook him down he had a half-a-dozen reefers on him and a package of sixty quarter-grain morphine tablets sewed into the lining of his jacket . . . and this." He handed Dude a crumpled piece of paper. "He tried to get rid of it before we saw it, but Ed caught it."

Dude looked down at the scrap of paper and turned

pale. Jackie's name and the name and address of the convalescent home were printed on it in large letters. "That rotten little sonofabitch!" Dude spat viciously.

"I decided to forget about planting anything on him or charging him with a sale because I didn't know what he had in mind for her," Frank said, tapping the piece of paper.

"Good thinking, Frank. You did the right thing."

"That's not all, Dude."

"Great," he replied dryly.

"When we put him in the squad car he went berserk, screaming that he was being framed and that you were behind it, so he was going to fix Jackie so that no one would ever recognize her again, and he was going to sing to the state's attorney about vote buying in the last election." Quinncannon paused. "You know Ed. He's got a pretty short fuse. Well, he took about five minutes of this from Karwowski and then wolloped him on the head with a sap. To make a long story short, I guess Ed hit him harder than he thought."

"Oh, my god! He didn't kill him, did he?" Dude was horror-struck.

"I was at County when I called you. They were taking him into surgery then. His chances don't look too good."

Dude lit a cigarette. "I got a call from Conforti right after I talked to you. How did he find out so quick?"

"That was our mistake. There was another guy with Karwowski when we picked him up. Another punk peddler by the name of Davenport, but he got away in the confusion. It must have been him that tipped to Conforti. When we pulled up at emergency over at County, two of the dago's lawyers were there to greet us and two of our men from internal affairs. Ed and I have been accused of police brutality and internal affairs has to make a formal investigation."

"Jesus, I'm sorry I got you into this mess, Frank."

"Don't worry about that. Ed and I have been that police-brutality route before. They can't prove a damn thing. I'm worried about you and Jackie. I don't think

Conforti is dumb enough to try anything, but if the Polack pulls through there's no telling what he might do."

"If anybody touches a hair on Jackie's head I'll see that Conforti gets indicted even if I have to go to jail, too."

"Now don't go getting yourself excited, Dude. Nothing has happened to her yet and chances are that nothing will happen. Just sit tight."

"Anything else, Frank? I don't know if my heart can stand it," Dude said, smiling thinly.

"That's about it. The admitting clerk at County is a friend of mine and she's promised to keep me posted on Rudy's condition."

Dude finished his drink in one gulp. "Can you give me a lift over to Jackie's place? I'm taking Kimmie and Maude to dinner."

"No problem."

When they were a half block away from the apartment house Dude saw the little girl and Maude.

"Where do you plan on eating? I'll run you there," the detective offered.

"Well, if you have the time, Frank, I'd appreciate it. The Oriental Gardens on Rush Street."

The short ride to the restaurant delighted the little girl. Frank turned on the siren for a block or two and Kimmie jumped up and down on the back seat with glee. Dude laughed with her and thought what a beautiful child she was. When she grew up, she was going to look exactly like her mother.

Mr. Ishimata, the owner of the Oriental Gardens, made a fuss over them when they entered the restaurant, and escorted them to his best booth.

"Why beautifur rady not with Mr. Dude?"

"She's been a little sick. Nothing serious."

Dude and Jackie ate there very often, and Mr. Ishimata always referred to her as 'Beautifur Rady.' Upon hearing that little Kim was Jackie's daughter, the small Japanese man nodded. "Ah so! Ritter Miss very beautifur, rike

mother. Ah so!" Kimmie, eyes saucerlike, stared in fascination at him.

"Now, how about two martinis on the rocks—make mine a double and make them very dry."

"I make, make sure you rike." He bowed twice, very low, and disappeared, muttering "Ah, so" to himself.

Maude leaned back in the seat and said, "This sure is an exotic place. I've never been here before."

"Jackie and I come here often and I think the only reason we do is that Ishimata makes such an ado over us." He turned his attention to Kimmie, who was listening intently, and said, "Well, now, young lady. Did I tell you that I was out to see your mommy today?" The little girl shook her head. "She's feeling much better, and she says she misses you all the time."

"When can Mommy come home, Dude?"

"Well, honey, it will be a few weeks yet. But if Dr. Kessell thinks she is well enough, maybe by next Sunday I'll be able to take you and Aunt Maude out to see her."

The restaurant owner returned with their drinks. He brought a champagne glass filled with ginger ale and topped with a cherry and an orange slice and placed it in front of Kimmie, beaming broadly. "You rike order now, Mr. Dude?"

"Mr. Ishimata, I shall leave that up to your excellent taste."

"Ah, so! Mr. Dude very kind. You have very best dinner house can offer."

Maude said, "Jackie called a little while ago. I think a toast is in order." She raised her glass.

"To the bride and groom," Maude said, touching her glass to his.

"Who's getting married?" Kimmie asked, raising her own cocktail in both hands to be included in the toast.

When all three had bumped glasses and had taken a sip of their drinks, Dude smiled affectionately at the beautiful black-haired child and asked, "How would you like it if your mommy and I got married?"

"That would be swell!" she said with a touch of won-

derment. "Will you be my daddy then, Dude? And will you come to live with us?"

"If you want, darling."

The little girl squirmed out of the booth opposite Dude and ran to him. Looking up at him, she said, "Mommy and I would like that very much. I love you, Dude."

He gathered her up in his arms, and she wound her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek. "And I love you, pumpkin." He hugged her gently, then sat her on the seat beside him.

Maude was touched; her eyes filled with tears. "Dude, I'm happy for you and Jackie."

"Thanks, Maude, but for the time being let's all keep it a secret until Jackie gets out of the hospital."

Mr. Ishimata appeared then at Dude's elbow to see if they wanted another drink, and Kimmie said brightly, "Mommy and Dude are getting married and Dude is going to be my new daddy."

"Well, there goes that secret," Dude said, winking at Maude.

"Ah, so!" Ishimata cried out. "Ishimata very happy for Mr. Dude. Wish many happy years and many children rike ruvery miss. Excuse, prease, I be right back."

"Kimmie!" Maude said sternly. "Now I don't want you to tell anyone else again until your mommy gets out of the hospital. It will be just our secret. Yours, your mommy's, Dude's and mine."

"Okay, Aunt Maude," she said, giggling.

Ishimata returned with one of the young waiters. They brought a tray of glasses and a bottle of champagne in a bucket of ice. "Ishimata wish to propose toast for this very speciur occasion. Ruvery miss must have ritter taste of wine. Very good wine. Mumm's 1927, good year."

"Why thank you very much," Dude said. "It is indeed an honor to have such a fine friend."

The waiter carefully wrapped the bottle in a towel and removed the cork. Kimmie laughed and clapped her hands at the loud pop, then said to the proprietor, "You mustn't

tell anyone about us getting married, Mr. Mata, it's a secret."

The Japanese put his forefinger to his lips and very confidentially whispered, "Ah, so! Secret just for us. Terr no one." He then filled the glasses, pouring a few drops for Kimmie, held up his glass, and said solemnly, "May rife be as beautifur as rotus brossom, and happiness surround you as genter night wind."

"How lovely," Maude said, dabbing at her eyes again.

The meal was excellent. When they finished, Dude ordered brandy for himself and Maude, and Kimmie snuggled close to him and yawned.

Maude looked at Dude. "I think somebody is getting sleepy."

"No, I'm not," the child said, and wriggled closer to Dude.

"Dude, who else knows of your plans?"

"Just Mike."

"I suppose you've thought about the reaction when downtown learns about it?"

"I have. And as far as I'm concerned it's a fact of life and sooner or later Whalen and all the rest of them will have to accept it. You see, by the time Jackie is released and well again it will be very close to the election and too late to eliminate me from the running. And when I'm elected alderman the most he can do in the way of punishment—and I'm certain there'll be some form of punishment—would be to bypass me for chairmanship of the finance committee. Oh, he'll rant and rave and fuss and fume for a few weeks, but in the long run he'll put up with it."

"Dude, it's none of my business, but is there anything to the rumor that you and that gangster Conforti have become chummy lately?"

"Maude, you know as well as I that he operates out of every damn ward in this city. You might as well ask me if the mayor is on the take. After all, he knows what's going on all over town," he replied evasively.

"All right Dude, I can take a hint."

"It's not that way at all, Maude. Not the way you think."

"Just be careful, Dude."

Dude motioned Maude to look at Kimmie who was sound asleep, her head resting on his lap. "I hate to wake her but I think we better take her home and put her to bed." He raised his free arm and signaled to the young waiter for his check.

But Mr. Ishimata saw the signal, approached the booth and said, "No charge. Tonight my friends my guests." Knowing some of the polite customs of the East, Dude knew better than to deny the gesture, so he said, "May we thank you for your most generous hospitality?"

The Japanese bowed and said, "You and the two ruvery radies have brought brightness to my humber house." There was another round of farewells before parting.

At the apartment, he and Maude managed to undress the child and put her pajamas on without fully awakening her. When they had her tucked in bed Dude bent down and kissed her cheek.

Kimmie reached up and placed a small hand on his face and said, "Good night, Dude."

It was a lonely ride back to the Royale.

Chapter 5

Dude tossed and turned most of the night. He was worried about the forthcoming raids in the ward. Unable to sleep, he was up, dressed, and reading the morning papers before six o'clock.

After scanning the sports pages he turned to Burtram Kolb's gossip column and was surprised to see his own name.

POLITICAL NOTES: James Morrissey, reform candidate for state's attorney announced at a political fund-raising luncheon at the Marlboro Hotel yesterday that he was conducting a probe into the activities of Fourth Ward Boss Patrick "Dude" Brennan, known to his associates as "The Clout" because of his close association with Mayor Whalen. Morrissey directly accused Brennan of having close ties with alleged underworld kingpin Antonio "Big Tony" Conforti, declaring that gambling and vice were rampant in the Fourth Ward and were conducted with the knowledge and cooperation of the Pol. How about that, Mr. Brennan?

Dude put the paper aside and said aloud, "Yeah, how about that?" Morrissey was going to be in for one hell of a surprise before this day was over.

After a light breakfast, he went to the wall safe in the bedroom closet and removed a bulky manila envelope. He felt uneasy about having the package with him until his

appointment with the city purchasing agent, Ward Donohue. The envelope contained ninety thousand dollars, all in one hundred dollar bills, and was a payoff to ensure that Boyd Teichner's construction company bid would be approved for the proposed subway to be built under Madison Street from the lake front to Austin Boulevard.

He grinned to himself when he thought what a howl Donohue would put up when he saw that the amount was exactly ten thousand dollars short of the figure agreed upon by Teichner and Donohue. But Dude would be damned if he would execute the whole transaction without extracting a fee for himself.

At nine o'clock, with the large payoff envelope tucked under his arm, he walked into the ward office. Bea was sitting at her desk and Mike was leaning over her. Near the window his father sat reading *Collier's* magazine. As if by some prearranged signal, all three stopped what they were doing and looked up at him.

He nodded to his father and Mike, then said awkwardly to Bea, "Hi, Princess."

She rose as he approached her desk and said quickly, "It was very unfair of me to walk out on you now. I'll be more than glad to stay on until the election. Then you can get a replacement."

Dude stared at his shoes and said in a low voice, "Thanks Bea. I appreciate this more than you know."

The secretary took some papers from her desk and handed them to her boss. "Here are the patronage letters for your dad, and a letter of introduction to Mr. Latham in the building department."

Dude signed the letters and handed them to the senior Brennan. "Take this one over to Danny Maher. His office is on the third floor at City Hall. Take the other to Bill Latham on the eighth floor. Ask Bill to call me when you get there."

Paddy put the letters in his pocket. "Thanks, son, and you won't have to be ashamed of me. I'll do a good job."

Dude smiled at him. "I know you will, Pa." Then to

Mike: "Mike, how about running Pa downtown and waiting for him?"

When he was alone with Bea in the office, he felt uncomfortable in her presence, and thought she felt the same way.

"Bea?" he began. Then hesitated. Before he could continue she said, "As far as the other night is concerned, what happened was bound to happen sooner or later, and now that it's over let's leave it that way. You were right all along, there could never be anything lasting between us, so let's just be friends, and get into the hard work of the campaign."

"All right, Bea," he said, careful not to call her Princess anymore. "What do we have on the agenda for today?" he asked politely.

Still standing, she looked at the appointment book. "Let's see. The letters for your dad are finished." And she drew a line through a notation in her book. "Sid Marcus is complaining that the people in his precinct haven't been receiving their relief checks on time and wants you to raise a rumpus downtown. Joe Flynn wants you to give his brother the okay so he can get on the police force; you are supposed to call Mr. Teichner some time before noon; at eleven-thirty you have an appointment with Mr. Donohue and lunch to follow. I've kept the afternoon free in case the mayor wants to see you. Oh, and Captain Haley called earlier and said he would probably see you later on at Whalen's office. Lynn called also and wants you to call her back as soon as possible. That's it for you. I had Mike run over to O'Keefe's and pick up the list of people who sent flowers and Mass cards. O'Keefe sent us three boxes of thank-you notes to use. I'll have them all mailed out by this evening."

"Okay," he replied. "But before you get to that, send our mimeograph form letter out to all the precinct captains and workers telling them that there will be a ward meeting at the Electricians Union Hall on Oakley and Madison Wednesday night at seven o'clock. And some time

today find Joe Flynn and set up an appointment for his brother later on in the week."

It took the committeeman a full hour on the telephone to finally nail down a promise that all the relief checks slated for distribution in his ward would be sent out on time in the future. At least through election day. He no sooner put the phone down when it began jangling. It was the chief building inspector with a friendly "Howdy, pal."

"Hi, Bill. Did my father get there yet?"

"He's here now with Mike. One hell of a nice guy, which proves wrong the old adage 'like father, like son.' I'm sending him out with one of the field men this morning so he's on the payroll as of today."

"Good. I'm sure you'll find that Pa will be quite an improvement over that thief Karwowski."

"Please, Dude!" Latham said. "You'll spoil my lunch. By the way, you should have seen his face when I told him he didn't have a clout anymore and that he was through with the department. I thought he was going to have apoplexy."

Dude laughed and said, "Yeah, I hear he was a bit upset over it. Did he resign or did you have to fire him?"

"Are you kidding?" Latham asked, astonished. "That stupid Polack could barely write his own name much less a letter of resignation. No, I gave him the boot without bothering to ask him to resign."

"Thanks, Bill. Tell Mike to come on back to the office. I'll be needing a lift downtown by eleven-thirty."

"Will do. Next time you're down this way give me a call and we'll have lunch."

"How about Thursday at one over at the Morrison?"

"You got a deal, partner. See ya."

He had to call the mayor's office several times before he could reach Lynn Sullivan. When she finally came on the line, he said, "You must be busier than a beehive down there today. I had one hell of a time getting through. What's up, honey?"

"Thank God you called!" she said in a frightened

voice. "Something awful has happened. I've got to see you right away."

"Calm down, Lynn," he said soothingly, "and tell me."

"I can't tell you over the telephone. Can't we meet somewhere? If I don't have a stiff drink pretty soon I'm afraid I'm going to go to pieces."

"Look, I have an appointment with Donohue at eleven-thirty in his office and from there we were going to lunch, but I'll cancel the lunch. Meet me in the Randolph Corners at noon. Call Eddie and tell him to hold a booth for us before the place gets jammed. You don't have to go to lunch with the mayor, do you?"

"No. He has to go to the budget hearings at eleven and he won't be back before two or two-thirty. I'll call Eddie now."

Dude hesitated, then asked, "Are you sure you can't let me know what it's all about?"

"No, Dude, there's too many nosy bitches down on that switchboard."

Mike returned to the office a couple of minutes before eleven and sat down in the easy chair near the window and began leafing through an old magazine. Dude was on the phone when Mike entered and he placed his hand over the mouthpiece and said, "Be right with you, Mike." He was waiting to be put through to Tom O'Gara one of his precinct captains who worked in the board of election commissioner's office. "It's about time you decided to answer your goddamned phone, Tom!" he roared, then without waiting for an excuse went on. "Are the new poll sheets out yet?"

"They came out this morning and I picked up a half a dozen copies from every precinct in the ward. I was planning on dropping them off at the ward office on my way home tonight."

"Good man, Tom. I've scheduled a ward meeting for Wednesday night at seven in the union hall. Pass the word along, just in case."

Then Dude picked up the large envelope and said to Bea, "I'll be at Ward's office until noon and then I'll be

at the Randolph Corners until one in case you need to reach me."

On the way down to City Hall, Mike said, "The cops bagged Red Kelly's book a little while ago. I was going to stop in, but as I drove by paddy wagons and cops were all over the place. How come you didn't know about it?"

"I did, Mike, but I forgot to tell you. Haley is going to hit every goddamn place in the ward. So for the next few days don't go placing any bets anywhere."

"Does Conforti know about this?"

"Hell, he knew it before I did."

"And he's going along with it?"

"Just halfway, Mike."

"What do you mean halfway?"

"Eighteen places were closed up tighter than a drum this morning."

"Is Pete Peterson's book going to get it?"

"Nope, his is on the preferred list."

Mike thought for a moment then asked testily, "Who leaked the info to Conforti?"

Dude snapped, "If you're thinking it was me, forget it. It was either Lynn or Jack Sullivan, or both. I'm not certain which, but I'll damn sure know before the day is out." Then added, more to himself than to Mike, "I'd better know."

Plush was the best word to describe the city purchaser's offices. The thick rugs and the furnishings were far more expensive than necessary for the city employee who occupied it. Mayor Whalen himself preferred working quarters less ostentatious than that of his chief buyer.

Dude entered the outer office, clutching the envelope of money tightly. He was relieved that he was finally to be rid of it. Donohue's petite brunette secretary greeted Dude. "Mr. Donohue is expecting you, Mr. Brennan." She opened the door to the inner office and stepped aside to let Dude pass. Donohue called to her, "I do not wish to be disturbed, Miss Marcucci. Please hold all my calls. Snap the lock on the door will you, Dude?" The

ward leader did so and crossed the large room and sat down in one of the two easy chairs opposite the ornate oak desk.

Ward Donohue was a large man in his early fifties. He had sandy hair that had not yet begun to turn gray and he looked trim. In his youth, he had distinguished himself on the gridiron at the Ivy League school he had attended, and since then worked out religiously in the gym at the Michigan Avenue Athletic Club.

Dude reached over and placed the thick envelope on the desk.

Donohue said, "You know, Dude, I must be getting soft-hearted in my old age. This deal is really worth three times as much as I let Teichner get away with." He opened the envelope and dumped the packets of bills on the desk.

"I think you did pretty well, considering you don't have to divvy it up with anyone. I'd say it's a fair size gratuity," Dude said, emphasizing the word "gratuity," a word he knew Donohue abhorred.

"Your choice of words is vulgar, Dude. This is just a token of appreciation for services rendered."

Dude watched him meticulously count the small mountain of money. When he finished, Donohue paused and gave Dude a pained look. "There is only ninety thousand here, Dude. It would seem our friend Boyd Teichner has shorted us by ten percent."

Dude grinned, knowing full well that Donohue knew where the missing ten thousand dollars was. "I have the ten grand, Ward."

"You?"

"Yes. My token of appreciation for services rendered."

"My boy, I believe that it was agreed upon that your portion was to be determined by me."

"Yeah, I know. But I decided to save you the trouble and took it out in advance."

"The amount I had in mind for you was somewhere in the neighborhood of five thousand, Dude."

"I figured as much, but I've moved to a better neighborhood."

Donohue looked grim. "Your actions in this matter could very well preclude you from participating in any future transactions."

"Bullshit!" Dude said. "You couldn't put over a ten cent deal in this town without the clout I've got with the mayor and you damn well know it. So quit being such a cheap bastard. You need me. I don't need you."

The city purchaser stared at Dude for a few minutes, then burst out laughing. "You are absolutely right. I should have known better than to minimize your importance to me."

Dude grinned and said, "I knew you would eventually see it my way."

Dude glanced at his watch and said, "I'll have to beg off lunch today, Ward; something has come up and I'm afraid I'll have to attend to it right now."

"It's just as well. Teichner was to join us and I'd just as soon you were not present. It's bad enough that I have to meet the bastard in public."

They shook hands. Dude waited at the door until Donohue scooped the money into his desk drawer and locked it. Then he let himself out.

The luncheon crowd had practically filled the restaurant lounge by the time Dude got there. The bartender nodded toward the rear, and then formed the word martini with his lips, knowing he would not be heard over the din. Dude nodded his assent. Lynn was waiting in the booth they had met at on Friday. She was pale and drawn. He noted three swizzle sticks beside the half-drained martini in front of her. He had never seen her looking so upset, and had never known her to down that many drinks. Before he was seated she smiled up at him nervously and said, "I've been here since eleven-fifteen. I just had to get out of that office."

Dude lit two cigarettes and handed one to her. He said

calmly, "Take your time, honey, and start at the beginning."

The blonde took a long sip of her drink, almost finishing it before she spoke. "I think Jack is going to be killed." She paused, then said, "Last night he told me everything and I don't know what I'm going to do. It's no secret that Jack has gotten in over his head from time to time with the bookies, but he always claimed that he hit some winners and got even. When he came in last night he told me that he was in debt to Conforti for five thousand dollars and that Conforti didn't want the money. Instead, he wanted a copy of an investigation the state's attorney just completed on five of Conforti's top lieutenants. He told Jack that I had access to the report and could get a copy. Of course I refused. Then Jack told me the rest of it."

The waitress appeared: they sat in silence until Dude's drink was served.

She began anew, somewhat calmer. "He told me he had never gotten even with the bookies and that each time he ran his IOU's up to five thousand dollars or more Conforti would collect them personally. I do quite a bit of work for the mayor at home because he doesn't want certain papers floating around the office. Well, Jack told me that he has been making copies of everything I've brought home for the past year. He gave them to Conforti to pay his gambling debts. Worst of all, he told me that he had given Conforti that list of places Captain Haley is raiding today. I know that with that advance information many of those places will be out of action before the police get there. You remember what the mayor said would happen if Haley found out there was a tipoff? God, he and the mayor are going to blame you. Haley called the mayor this morning and they set up a conference for four o'clock this afternoon. I'm supposed to contact you and tell you to be there. I know they have already decided that you tipped that gangster off. What should I do? I can't let you take the blame for what Jack has done."

Dude was relieved that she was not a coconspirator. He

ordered another drink, then said, "I'm not too sure the good captain and the mayor can absolutely pin the tipoff on me. After all, Conforti has all sorts of connections in the police department and a leak could have come from anywhere. I'll play it by ear this afternoon, but if it looks as though they are going to back me into a corner I'm afraid I'll have to tell them about Jack's involvement. Does the mayor know that you and Jack are going to get a divorce?"

"Yes. He's the one who suggested I have Burt Witt handle it for me."

"Good. The worst that can happen would be for Whalen to give you a vacation until Jack moves out of the house."

"He already has, Dude. I made him pack his things last night. He's staying with his aunt out in Berwyn."

"Okay. Now, get this. They will want to talk to you and verify the story. Under no circumstances tell them about his wanting you to get that report on Conforti's goons."

"But they'll kill him if he doesn't!" She seemed on the verge of hysteria.

"Take it easy, honey!" he said quietly. "Nobody is going to kill anyone. Conforti is not that stupid. He has other ways of getting that report. When I come back to your office for the meeting this afternoon, I'm going to bring you five thousand dollars. I want you to give it to Jack and tell him for me that if he places one more bet anywhere in this whole goddamned state I'll see to it that both his legs are broken. And he knows I'm capable of having it done."

"I can't let you do that, Dude. I'd rather give the report to him."

"You'll do exactly as I say, Lynn!" he said sharply. "If you don't, it could wind up that all three of us could be made to look as though we've been in cahoots all along."

"I guess I'm too frightened to think straight."

He winked at her, then said, "Good girl: do what I say. Now, let's have something to eat."

"Honestly, I'm not a bit hungry. I'll just have a cup of black coffee."

He ordered steak sandwiches for both of them over her protests.

When they finished their lunch, Lynn took his hand in both of hers. "I could fall in love with you very easily, Dude. In fact, I think I already am."

He smiled at her and said, "Not really, honey, but we are fond of each other, aren't we?"

Dude saw Mike waiting at the bar, and realized that it was after one o'clock. He paid the check, and said to Lynn, "I've got to get back to the office now. Take it easy until I see you later on." She nodded and they left together, picking Mike up on the way out.

Before returning to the office, Dude stopped at his apartment and picked up the five thousand dollars he had promised Lynn to bail Jack out.

Bea handed him a message from Frank Quinncannon. The number turned out to be the Turf Bar on Wells Street in the Loop. "Frank, it's a little early in the day for you to be out boozing it up, isn't it?"

"Nope," the detective replied, sounding a bit drunk. "Our friend Karwowski pulled through, although he's going to have a pretty sore noggin for the next few weeks."

"Well, that's good news, and it's about time. I've been hearing nothing but bad news all day."

"Don't tell me. Let me guess. Captain Haley, the Sir Lancelot of the criminal intelligence unit, has been swooping down all over your ward like a swarm of locusts. Right?"

Dude couldn't help smiling. "News gets around fast, doesn't it?"

"Sure does. I ran into him a little while ago down at central and he was fit to be tied. He was screaming bloody murder that his little expedition was a miserable failure because someone tipped their hand and they con-

nected in twenty-two places instead of forty. Methinks he has you in mind as being the blabbermouth."

"Not on your life, Frank. But I do know who did and I'm afraid I'm going to have to throw him to the wolves."

"Anyone I know?"

"Could be."

"And you're not saying?"

"Right you are, my friend."

"Okay, Dude. I'll keep in touch and let you know when they turn the Polack loose."

Dude spent the next couple of hours going over the figures and percentages of the registered voters and the persons actually voting in the April primary. He made notes to use at the ward meeting on Wednesday.

At three forty-five he and Mike started for City Hall. On the way down he told his chauffeur that he hadn't the vaguest idea when the meeting would be over and that probably he would go to see Maude and Kimmie later on, so Mike could take the rest of the day off if he wished.

Dude pushed through the double doors leading to the mayor's outer reception room and warmly greeted the two uniformed policemen sitting at their desks. They gave him the go-ahead and he passed through on into Lynn's office.

He pressed the envelope containing the five thousand dollars into her hand before she could say anything. She quickly put it in her purse then said, "They've been talking for almost an hour. Wait a second and I'll tell them you're here." She knocked lightly, then opened the door and announced him. As he started in she whispered, "Good luck."

The mayor pointed to a vacant chair next to the police captain and he sat down.

Captain Haley said, looking at Dude, "As you know, eighteen of Conforti's establishments had prior knowledge of our visits today."

"Now just a minute, Haley!" Dude cut in hotly. "Just what the hell do you mean by 'as you know'? I have no

idea how many places you visited today. I came here to find out what progress you made, not to listen to any innuendos or any accusations!"

"Let's get to the facts without any quarreling, gentlemen," Whalen broke in.

Haley shot Dude a disgusted look and directed his attention to Mayor Whalen. "I had a handpicked force selected: thirty men whom I know personally are not on the take. Within four hours, armed with search warrants, we hit every one of the places listed on that sheet." He pointed to the paper the mayor had in his hand. "The ones I have underlined were empty. And out of those, the ones I have marked with stars are the collection points for their operations throughout the city. It should be obvious that the most important places on that whole list had suspended operations. As far as I am concerned Mr. Mayor, Brennan here is the only one who could have tipped the 'outfit' off."

"Well, son," Whalen asked slowly, "did you warn Conforti? Just a simple yes or no. Did you?"

Dude could feel the anger building up inside him, and said, through clenched teeth, "Did you rule out any other possibility of a leak or did you both just decide on me from the beginning?"

"Can't you answer the mayor, Mr. Brennan?" Haley asked.

Dude lit a cigarette, then began his attack. "No, I did not tip to Conforti! I didn't have to. Last Thursday he knew the when and the where of Dick Tracy's crusade. I just learned today how he knew." Now it was Dude's turn to sit back and look smug.

"He's bluffing," Haley said indifferently.

"But no one else knew, Dude," the mayor commented skeptically.

"No one," echoed Haley.

"No one, Your Honor?" Dude asked, smiling.

"You are not pointing a finger at Lynn, are you? I simply won't buy it. I've known her and her family for twenty-five years."

"But how well do you know her husband Jack?"

"I don't understand," Whalen said, sounding very bewildered.

Dude leaned forward. "For the past year Jack Sullivan has been gambling heavily with the bookies. Each time his markers got to the five-grand level, Conforti would pick them up and trade them back for any information Sully could acquire from Lynn. She never realized that every time she brought confidential information home from here he would pass along those items Conforti would be interested in. Ten days ago Conforti picked up another batch of IOU's, and Sully bought them back for a copy of that list you have in your hand."

"How can you be sure?" questioned the astonished city leader.

"Last night Sully had a severe attack of conscience and told Lynn everything," Dude partially lied.

Whalen sat dumbfounded for what seemed like hours before pressing a small buzzer on his desk. Lynn stepped into the office, and asked, "Did you want me, sir?"

"Yes, dear," Whalen said quietly. "Is this business true about Jack's gambling and his connection with Conforti?"

For a moment Dude thought she would break down and cry, but she fought back the tears valiantly. "It's true. Everything Mr. Brennan told you is true. I told him all about it. The only thing he probably didn't tell you is that after Jack told me I made him move out of the house for good. I spoke to Burt a short while ago and he's going ahead with the divorce petition."

The mayor came from behind his desk and put a short pudgy arm around Lynn's shoulder and said, in a fatherly tone, "It's not your fault, Lynn. Don't you feel badly about it. The matter is closed. Loyalty like yours is rare today. And Dude here is grateful to you, I know. The captain and I went in blindly and came close to ruining him. You can get back to your office now, dear. Everything is going to be all right."

When Lynn had departed, Haley slapped his knee loud-

ly. "What a stroke of luck! We've got Conforti now! We've got him!"

"How?" Whalen asked.

"Simple," Haley said, bubbling over with enthusiasm. "We get this Jack Sullivan, have the state's attorney grant him immunity from prosecution, and have him tell his dirty little story to the grand jury."

"You forgot to add that in doing what you propose he also signs his own death warrant," Dude remarked sarcastically.

"We'll give him plenty of protection," the captain promised excitedly.

"You'll never get him to testify against Conforti," Dude said mildly, then added: "And if he does Lynn won't have to worry about that divorce. She'll become a widow in short order."

The mayor intervened. "Dude, I think you are putting things all out of proportion. Besides, the final decision will have to be made by Sullivan himself. I see no harm in Captain Haley having a friendly talk with him."

Haley looked at Dude and said, "If he says no, then we will drop the whole thing. Fair enough?"

Dude got to his feet and said, "Just leave me out of it. Whatever you decide, I want no part of it."

"If you want it that way, Dude," the mayor said, then added, "I hope you have no ill feelings against the captain or myself for our little misunderstanding about you, son."

Dude gave them his best smile and offered his hand to them. "Think nothing of it, these things happen."

As he passed Lynn on his way out, Dude said, "Meet me at the Randolph Corners as soon as you can get away."

"I'll be there in about half an hour."

It was more than an hour before she entered the bar. Dude was just finishing his fourth martini and was feeling slightly drunk. She slid into the booth beside him and, to his surprise, kissed him full on the lips. His desire for her rose quickly and he desperately tried to focus his at-

tention on anything but this warm and exciting woman sitting so close to him.

"What was that for?" he asked.

"For being a swell guy."

He signaled a waitress. After the drinks were ordered and served, he asked, "What happened after I left, honey?"

"I don't know, Dude. They were in there for almost an hour before the mayor called me back in. They wanted to know where they could reach Jack. They said they just wanted to talk to him, and not to worry. I don't know if I did the right thing, but I gave them the address and phone number of Jack's aunt. Did I do wrong, Dude?"

He looked long into her china-blue eyes and finally said, "It doesn't make any difference, honey, Haley would have found out anyway. I don't suppose they told you what they wanted to talk to Jack about, did they?"

"No."

"That figures."

"What do they want from him, Dude?" she asked apprehensively.

"Haley wants to be the next police commissioner so bad he can taste it and he thinks that if he can put Conforti behind bars that will do it for him."

"I'm not sure I understand."

"Easy. He'll scare hell out of your numbskull husband. offer him immunity, and make him testify before a grand jury about his dealings with Tony Conforti."

"I don't think he will do it," she said simply.

"I know goddamn well he won't do it!" Dude grinned.

"What will happen if Jack turns them down?"

"Nothing."

"You don't think they'll force him into it, do you?"

"They can't." Dude was positive. "Besides, Whalen isn't keen on involving you. And Jack is scared to death of Conforti. I wouldn't be surprised if Jack skipped town."

Lynn sighed, then slipped her arm through his and held it tightly. The drinks had made him feel a bit reckless and he said, very quietly, "Let's go over to my place."

"I can't, Dude," she answered softly. "The housekeeper leaves at seven and I can't leave the kids alone."

"Call her and tell her you'll be late," he said, placing his hand on her warm thigh.

"Not tonight," she answered, her hand gently over his. "I have to reach Jack somehow and give him the money."

He removed his hand. "I'm sorry honey, I shouldn't have asked. Forget I said anything."

"Don't get the wrong idea, Dude. I've wanted you badly for a long time. Later this evening my mother is coming over and she's going to take the kids home with her for a few days. Ask me tomorrow."

"Okay," he said huskily. "Dinner at the Chez about seven?"

"It's a date, handsome! Now I have to run."

She kissed him again lightly. As he watched her leave he had an urge to follow her and try to talk her into spending the night with him.

He ordered a pot of black coffee and had Eddie bring a telephone to the booth. When the phone plug had been jacked in he called his office. Although it was after six o'clock Bea was still working and he became irritated. "How come you're there so late?"

"Just finishing up the mailing," she replied sweetly. "Mike is here and is going to drive me home. Do you want to talk to him?"

He thought a moment then said, "No. I just wanted to find out if I had any calls."

"Just one. Dr. Kessell called and wants you to call him in the morning," she replied.

"Thanks, Bea. You get along home now and I'll see you in the morning."

He finished the coffee before calling Maude. She told him that she had spoken to Ben Kessell earlier when she couldn't reach Jackie. Kessell said Jackie was going through the worst of the withdrawal pains: he preferred she didn't receive any calls for the time being. Dude said he would check with her in the morning.

He paid his tab and had Eddie call a taxi for him, but

he didn't feel like going to his empty apartment so he had the cabby take him to the Café Venice on Rush Street. It was time to eat, anyway. The veal seemed tasteless to him and he ate only half of it, then pushed it aside and ordered a bourbon on the rocks. Angelo Bertolini, the young owner of the place, came over and sat down at his table.

"I see you didn't finish your supper. Anything wrong with it?" the restaurateur wanted to know.

"No," Dude said. "I guess I'm just not hungry."

"You look as though you lost your best friend, Dude. Why so glum?" Angelo asked.

"Just one of those days, I guess," the committeeman said.

"You know what you need, my friend?" the handsome Italian asked.

"I know. I should go out and get laid. Right?" Dude asked.

"Best cure for the blues. You know my waitress, Nancy, don't you?" he asked, nodding toward a tall attractive girl with long, wavy chestnut hair who was busy serving a party of four.

"I've seen her a few times."

"She asked me who you were and thinks you are good-looking. Obviously, the poor child needs glasses," the young man said, laughing. "I'll give her the night off. Just say the word."

Dude shook his head and said, "Maybe some other time, pal. I think I'll go home and hit the sack early."

The restaurant owner lit a long thin cigar before asking, "Where's Jackie tonight? I haven't seen you without her in a long time. Did you two break up?"

"No. She's in the hospital with a minor kidney infection. Probably be out in a couple of weeks."

"Tell her I asked about her when you see her."

"Will do, Angelo," he said as he rose to leave.

As the taxi drove off and he started into his hotel, two men stepped out of the shadows. He recognized them as the torpedoes who were always present at the Forest Park restaurant during his meetings with Conforti. The

taller of the two smiled, and said, "Mr. C. was disappointed that you didn't keep your appointment with him this afternoon."

"I told him I would be tied up and wouldn't be able to make it," Dude said angrily and started to walk around him.

The shorter man moved quickly to block his path and said politely, "The boss would like to see you *now*, Mr. Brennan. We have a car and we'll drive you out and back."

Dude decided that it would be sheer folly to argue with the pair, so he said resignedly, "Lead the way, gentlemen."

On the long drive out, he wondered whether or not to tell Conforti about Haley's plans for Sully. By the time they had arrived at the familiar restaurant he had decided to tell him only if Conforti started getting nasty with him.

The syndicate leader was sitting at his usual table, smoking one of his long Havana cigars. He waited until Dude was seated, then said pleasantly, "I waited for over two hours today for you to show up."

"I told you that I wouldn't be here, Tony. I was with the mayor until almost six. There was no way I could have made it."

"Well you are here now, Mr. Brennan, so let's get down to cases. Rudy Karwowski was worked over thoroughly by Quinncannon yesterday and the incident upset me. Ordinarily I would have overlooked it, but Mr. Karwowski is currently negotiating a rather large and intricate transaction for me and his current hospitalization has caused me some embarrassment. We are engaging in a new enterprise involving a substance called heroin and I need Mr. Karwowski's help in working out the details. It is imperative that the charges against him be dropped."

Dude tried to recall where he had heard the word "heroin" before, but couldn't. He lit a cigarette and said, "You picked a real winner. Are you aware that he's running off at the mouth that he's going to sing to the state's attorney about vote buying in my ward? And most im-

portant of all he's threatened to throw acid in Jackie's face. I'm planning to marry her in a few weeks and I promise you that if anything happens to her I'll do some fancy talking to the state's attorney myself."

Conforti frowned and said, "I can assure you that this was unknown to me. I personally guarantee that he will sing to no one. And furthermore you may set your mind at ease in regards to your fiancée. Mr. Karwowski will in no way bother her. As soon as he leaves the hospital my associates and I will see to it that his thinking is brought into proper focus. I do, however, need your co-operation in having those charges against him disposed of."

Dude had no choice and he knew it. "He's going to have to be booked: that part I can do nothing about. But when it comes up for trial I'll see to it that the case is continued for several months then quietly dropped."

"Excellent, Mr. Brennan!" exclaimed the Sicilian. "You are a rare man, indeed. Should you require financial assistance, please let me know."

"I may have to drop a few bucks to the prosecutor, but we will worry about that when the time comes," Dude said, then ventured to strike a bargain. "Now. You tell your lawyers to withdraw the police-brutality charges against Ed Dunne and Frank Quinncannon. When that's done I'll do my part."

"All right. That concludes our business, sir. My apologies for having to have you come all the way out here so late."

Dude thought for a moment, then decided he had better let Conforti in on the Sullivan matter. The suave Sicilian listened intently while Dude related the conversations that had taken place in the mayor's office, and finished, "I think you should have a talk with Sully. I doubt that he would go along with the deal, but then again you can never be sure."

Conforti called over one of his two lieutenants and said to Dude: "This news comes not a moment too soon." Then to his man he said, "Get Pete Peterson on the

phone right away. Sullivan is meeting Pete at his place at nine o'clock. Tell Pete to hold him there until we arrive."

"Yes, sir," the hood said, and went directly to the phone booth.

Dude was sorry he had told Conforti about Jack Sullivan. "Do me a favor, Tony? Don't lean on Sully; I don't want him hurt."

Conforti smiled and said, "You have no need for concern, Mr. Brennan. I assure you that the strongest measure that will be taken will be a stern lecture just to remind him where his loyalties lie."

Jack Sullivan was terrified. He was certain that he was going for a one-way ride. He was sandwiched between Conforti and the tall killer nicknamed "Cowboy" in the rear of the gangster's limousine, in front of the bookmaker's lunchstand. Jack reached into his pocket, and pulled out the envelope containing the five thousand dollars Lynn had given him earlier that evening. He offered the money to the Sicilian. "I can't get that report you asked for, but here's the five grand I owe you. Now we're even."

"Forget the report," Conforti said mildly. "And forget the five thousand. I have a much more important matter to discuss with you."

"Please, Mr. Conforti!" Sullivan begged. "I don't want anything more to do with you; I'm in enough trouble. My wife is divorcing me over all of this and I'm going to lose my kids."

Conforti ignored him. "Captain Haley will be talking to you shortly. He is going to ask you to go before a grand jury and testify about our business transactions. Cowboy here thinks you will do as he asks. I do not. After all, we are friends, are we not?"

"Oh, my God!" Sullivan cried. "I won't tell him a thing—believe me, not a thing!" Then he pleaded, "Can I go now?"

Conforti said, "See, Cowboy? You were wrong. Mr. Sullivan would do nothing that might harm his friends. Isn't that right, Mr. Sullivan?"

"Please let me go; I won't tell anyone anything."

Before replying, Conforti lit a cigar. "You have two little girls. Twins, I believe. Isn't that right, Mr. Sullivan?"

"Oh, my God!" Sullivan wailed, near hysteria.

"I like children," Conforti continued smoothly, "and animals. You know, the other day I saw something that upset me very much. A little puppy accidentally wandered out into the street and was run over by a dump truck. The poor thing's skull was crushed and its brains were splattered all over the street. Nasty sight. But accidents do happen and all one can do is to be very careful and try to prevent them. Don't you agree, Mr. Sullivan?"

Jack Sullivan was openly sobbing and did not answer the question. After several moments Cowboy punched him savagely in the kidney, evoking a sharp cry. "Mr. Conforti asked you a question. Answer him!"

"Yes. Yes," Sullivan barely whispered.

"Yes what, Mr. Sullivan?" Conforti pursued.

"Yes, I know how to prevent accidents."

The Sicilian patted Sullivan on the shoulder and said, "Excellent. You may go now, Mr. Sullivan. I believe we understand each other much better now that we have had our little talk."

Cowboy got out of the car, then half-dragged Sullivan out and roughly shoved him down on the sidewalk. Jack Sullivan lay there humbly as the limousine roared off into the night.

On the way back to the city Dude had had his escorts stop so that he could pick up the early editions of the morning papers.

Whalen's press secretary had done a magnificent job of convincing them that Dude had masterminded the crack-down. He was relieved. But the apartment was too quiet for him, so he switched on the radio, and listened to the ten o'clock news half-expecting to hear that something terrible had happened to Sully. Nothing had, so he turned it

off and poured himself a stiff shot of Irish whiskey. By ten-thirty, and several shots later, he had convinced himself that Sully was a doomed man.

He wanted to be with Lynn in case she was notified that Sully had been murdered. He picked up the phone and called her house. He wasn't sure how he would handle it. When she answered he tried to sound as casual as he could. "Hi, honey, I hope I didn't wake you up."

"Hi, yourself, handsome. Fancy talking to you so soon. I never go to bed this early, besides, my mother left an hour or so ago with the kids and I'm alone, and glad you called." She sounded relaxed and in good spirits. He hoped that his voice would not betray him. "Would it be too late for you to come out and have a drink with me? I promise, no more propositions."

She laughed. "In that case, the answer is no."

"Be serious, Lynn. How about meeting me at the Alton in thirty minutes or so?"

"Okay," she said softly. "I could stand a couple of drinks and I can't think of anyone else I'd rather have them with."

"See you in a little while," Dude said, relieved.

He was waiting, listening to the piano player and did not see Lynn until she was standing beside his table smiling at him. She took his breath away: she looked marvelous in a sheer, bare, black cocktail dress.

He stood up. "My God!" he said. "I never realized you were so beautiful."

She smiled. "I didn't think you would ever notice." Then she reached over and took a sip of his drink. "What are we drinking, handsome?"

Dude had not quite recovered from the shock, and said, "Jack is out of his mind for sure. You are an absolute goddess."

He ordered more of the same, then asked, "Have you heard from or seen Jack since I saw you?"

She looked at him questioningly. "Yes. When I got

home after I left you, he was there waiting for me. I gave him the money and told him what you said. I told him to get the money to Conforti soon, and to stay away from his aunt's house until he did, that Captain Haley was out there looking for him. I thought he was going to faint when I told him why the police wanted to talk to him."

"Did he say anything about where he was going tonight or who he would see about returning the money to Conforti?"

"He said something about meeting someone at nine. He didn't say who. I'm beginning to get frightened. Why all these questions?"

Dude did his level best to look calm. "I just wanted to make sure he returned the money and didn't make a deal with Haley. I'll be right back, honey, I have to make a phone call." He got up fast before she could ask more questions, and on his way to the telephone booth in the Hotel Alton lobby, he signaled the waitress to bring fresh drinks.

He was in luck. Haley was still at his office at central police headquarters, probably finishing the reports on the day's activities. "Captain Haley? This is Dude Brennan. I hate to bother you, but I was curious to know if you've had a chance to talk to Jack Sullivan yet."

"We just came from his aunt's house in Berwyn. We waited for about three hours before he showed up. We talked to him until we were blue in the face. His answer was no and he refused to budge. I'll tell you my feeling: I think he was with Conforti earlier, because he was scared out of his wits. As a last resort, I tried a bluff. I told him that we were going to subpoena him before the grand jury anyway whether he liked it or not. That got to him, I think. He almost went into shock. We left on that note. After he sleeps on it tonight, he might change his mind."

You dumb bastard, Dude thought angrily, then asked, "You certainly aren't serious about bringing him up before the grand jury, are you?"

"Hell, no." The Captain laughed. "Mayor Whalen won't allow it; you heard him. Anything Sullivan does in the

way of singing has to be voluntary. Look, I still have a mountain of paperwork to wade through tonight and I'd like to get home and get some sleep. I'll talk to you tomorrow after we see him again: we're going out there at noon."

"Thanks, Captain."

Lynn was cross. "All right, Dude, what was that?"

"I was talking to Haley."

"And?"

"They saw Jack about an hour ago in Berwyn. He's okay. Apparently he paid Conforti off earlier and that wop must have scared the hell out of him, because he won't cooperate with Haley at all."

"Dude? Level with me. Are they going to kill Jack?"

"Not a chance, honey," he said as convincingly as he could. "Conforti knows that the police are trying to get Jack to talk, and he also knows Jack will keep his mouth shut. I think Jack ought to take a vacation for a few weeks in Miami. I'll make the arrangements tomorrow, and give you some money."

She looked at him for a long time. Then she reached to brush a lock of his black hair off his forehead. "I won't accept it. You have done too much already. I know that you're only doing it because of me."

"You know better than that, Lynn. You saved my hide today and you didn't have to do it. No matter what happens I will always be in your debt."

She shook her head stubbornly. "I won't take any more from you for Jack. He will have to stand on his own two feet and work things out for himself. And I want this whole sordid divorce business over with, to be free of him for good. There isn't a shred of love left between us."

He asked softly, "What will you do after the divorce?"

"I don't know, Dude. I don't even want to think about it. Not now."

He looked long into her eyes. "You know that I'll always be around to help."

She touched his hand, and said, in barely a whisper,

"Why couldn't it have been you that I met fifteen years ago?"

"You only get one shot at life," he said wistfully, adding, "I guess we just have to make the most of it."

"Well, then," she said, "let's you and I make the most of what is left while we can."

Dude stopped her before she could say anything else by placing a finger over her lips. "Don't say it Lynn. Don't say anything we might both regret later."

She said fiercely, "You want me as badly as I want you, Dude Brennan, now just what in hell are you going to do about it?" Then she leaned toward him and kissed him, before he could answer.

His resistance, what little there was left in him, disappeared. He ran his fingers through her platinum-blond, almost white hair. Then he told her: "I'll check us in here for the night."

She smiled. "We both need each other tonight. I promise you it won't be a night you will easily forget."

And it wasn't.

Jack Sullivan's body was to be discovered shortly after noon on the following day.

Chapter 6

Dude was wide awake in the hotel room. He smoked a cigarette and studied Lynn as she slept. Sometime during the night she had slipped into a long black nightgown. He smiled as he thought how fully prepared she had been. How sure of him she must have been! Her suitcase had been in her car: when he got it, he found not only did she have a full change of clothes so she could go directly to her job from the hotel, but before meeting him she had stopped at a drugstore and bought a razor, blades, toothpaste, a toothbrush, and a bottle of aftershave lotion for him.

He snuffed out his cigarette in the ashtray on the night table. And he kissed her, and she awoke with a low moan, slipped her arms around him, and held him tightly. Then she stretched and smiled. Like Jackie, her beauty required little or no makeup.

She said coquettishly, "This is the only way to be awakened in the morning." Then she got up, standing next to the bed, and pulled two delicate ribbons on either side of the gown. It slipped to the floor. She had the body of a twenty-four-year-old girl and Dude found it difficult to believe that she was thirty-eight, only two years younger than himself. He put his arms behind his head and relaxed, thoroughly enjoying the view. She closed her eyes, and, standing on tiptoes, stretched provocatively. Her firm, full breasts with the nipples pointing upward stood out magnificently, and complemented the flat stomach

and the roundness of her small hips and the slender graceful legs. His desire rose quickly.

"C'mere," he whispered hoarsely, and in an instant she was back in the bed, her head on his chest. Any thoughts he had had of leaving were forgotten. He kissed her again, feeling her fiery tongue exploring his mouth. He caressed her breasts until she moaned softly. His hand moved down her side, along her thigh, then up between her legs. She was moist and warm. She dug her fingernails into his back and she began breathing harder, and moaned again. It sounded to his ears more like the purring of a contented cat than that of an ecstatic woman.

She was trembling with passion. When he entered her, her breath was coming in gasps and she bit his lip and he could taste the blood trickling inside his mouth. When he exploded inside of her she wrapped her legs around him tighter, arching her back, and cried out—"My God, Dude! My God!"

For a long while they stayed in each other's arms. Finally she whispered, "I have never been made love to like this before. I never knew it could be so wonderful."

"Neither did I," he lied, then thought guiltily, except for Jackie.

They were dressed and ready to leave before eight o'clock. Lynn looked stunning in a beige suit with a white ruffled blouse, and he told her so. At the door she paused, and said, "Thank you for a beautiful evening." Then she tilted her head back to be kissed. He looked fondly at her and, after kissing her tenderly, said, "I'm the one to thank you, honey."

Waiting for the elevator she asked, "We will do this again, won't we, Dude?" It was more of a statement than a question.

He squeezed her hand gently and said, "You know we will." Dude returned the room key to the desk clerk, and gave him the keys to Lynn's Chevrolet and asked him to have her suitcase put in the trunk of the car. He described the location and color of the convertible and

handed the clerk a dollar to tip the bellman. "We will be in the dining room."

They breakfasted leisurely on ham and eggs and Dude was on his second cup of coffee when the bell captain brought the keys to Lynn's car. Dude pocketed them. Then he turned to her and said, "I've decided to call Haley this morning and see if I can tag along with him when he goes out to see Jack. When Jack sees me I think it will be moral support, and he'll refuse Haley once and for all."

"I hope so." She was a trifle apprehensive. "But promise me there will be no trip to Miami for him. That's out."

"Okay, honey, if that's the way you want it."

As they got up to leave, he said, "I'll take a cab to the office."

"You will do no such thing," she said. "I'll drive you there; I still have plenty of time."

He looked doubtful and said, "Bea and Mike will probably be at the office by now and if they see us driving up together, they will probably put two and two together."

"Let them."

"You sure have a mind of your own."

"Quit worrying." As they drove to the ward office, she asked, "Do we still have a date for tonight?"

"Uh-huh. I'll call you later on in the day and let you know what time I'll be able to get away."

"Not before seven, darling. I have to go home and change and put some fresh clothes in my suitcase."

He looked mildly surprised and said, "I thought we were just going over to the Chez for dinner and a little dancing."

She smiled impishly at him. "We are. But I have other plans for you afterwards, that is, if you're interested."

"Oh, you can bet your booties I'm interested." He grinned.

She parked boldly right in front of the ward headquarters. She turned off the ignition and placed her hand on his arm. "Let me know what happens if you go out with Haley to see Jack."

"I'll call you as soon as I know something," he said.

As he was about to get out of the car she reached over and kissed him full on the mouth.

"For god's sake, Lynn!" he said angrily.

"Don't be such a prude," she answered.

Quickly he got out of the car. "Talk to you later, honey."

"Say hello to Bea for me," she said sassily.

"Bitch!" he said, then hurried into the office.

After saying good morning to Bea and Mike he sat down at his desk and cursed silently because there was no way the pair could have missed seeing what had taken place in Lynn's car. I'll be goddamned if I'll be made to feel guilty by these two, he thought. It's none of their business.

Bea looked at him through narrowed eyes and said coldly, "Tom O'Gara brought the new poll sheets over last night, and I tabulated them and compared them with the April sheets. The totals and percentages are here," and handed him two typewritten memos.

"Thank you," he replied just as coldly and thought, Two can play that game, sister.

Mike abruptly walked out and Dude watched him standing near the curb outside the office lighting a cigarette. "So that's the way it's going to be, is it?" he said curtly and slammed his open palm down on the desk.

Bea jumped slightly at the sudden bang, but she wasn't sure the remark was directed at her. She glanced at him once, unsure, then resumed typing a current list of all the families receiving relief checks. She knew he needed it before Wednesday's ward meeting.

Dude attached the two poll sheet memos to the top sheet of a legal pad, stapled them together, then phoned Haley.

"Good morning, Captain. I hope you got a good night's rest."

"Oh, it's you Dude," he said in a friendly tone. "Yes, I got home about one-thirty this morning. By the way, after analyzing the results of yesterday's raids, I'm quite

pleased. We made a substantial dent in Mr. Conforti's operations."

The committeeman smiled to himself then said, "Good. I think we ought to get together soon and plan another surprise party in my ward."

"I'm glad you feel that way. You can be sure that you will be in on the ground floor next time, Dude."

"I appreciate that," Dude said innocently. "What I called about is this: I got to thinking after our conversation last night that it might not be a bad idea if I went with you today to talk to Jack Sullivan. I just may be able to talk him into seeing things our way."

The captain was silent for a few moments then said, "A good idea. You know him. He'll probably trust your judgment. Besides, he indirectly involved you by turning that list over to Conforti. Tell you what, I'll pick you up at eleven-thirty."

"I'll be waiting for you," Dude said. All through the phone conversation he had been watching Mike pace up and down in front of the big plate-glass window of the storefront office. It angered him.

Between nine-thirty and eleven there was a steady parade of ward residents in and out of the headquarters. Some complained about everything from the tearing up of certain streets by the public works department to tardy garbage pickups; some sought jobs and petty favors; some asked for his intervention to fix everything from a parking ticket to an armed-robbery charge.

His patience seemed limitless. He wrote each person's name, address, precinct captain, and complaint or request on a pad, along with the action taken, or planned whether it was a referral to a city department or a request that the person call back in a day or so. All was duly noted. He knew that if the matter was concluded to the person's satisfaction he would brag to his neighbors that Committeeman Dude Brennan was his clout. More important, it was election-time insurance that each one of them would vote the way "Old Dude" wanted them to.

When the last person left the ward office, he turned to

Bea and said, "I'm going next door for a cup of coffee. Do you want me to bring you anything?"

"No," she answered, not looking up from her typewriter.

Mike was leaning against the fender of the Packard when Dude walked out of the office, and said to the big man, "C'mon, let's go have a cup of coffee." Mike nodded and followed Dude into the small diner next door. When they were seated at the counter with mugs of coffee in front of them, Dude asked, "Okay, Mike, what the hell is eating you?"

"You are an A number-one all-American bastard. Did you know that?" his chauffeur offered.

"And what brings you to that conclusion?"

"Bold as brass you are," Mike started in. "Shacking up with Lynn Sullivan, a married woman with four children. Then having the guts to come here with her so Bea would be sure to get the message. I'm surprised you didn't take her out to the hospital and show her off to Jackie."

Dude was seething, but he was determined not to let Mike know it. "Number one: Lynn and Sully are separated and she has already filed for divorce. Number two: I met her early this morning in the coffee shop in the Morrison hotel for breakfast because I wanted to talk to her before she went to the office," he lied very convincingly. "Number three: she was kind enough to drive me back here, and that kiss you saw was just her way of saying thanks for bailing Sully out of his troubles with Conforti. Number four: none of the first three things are any of your goddamned business, anyway. Since when did you become my conscience or my keeper, for that matter?"

Mike sulked for several minutes, apparently trying to make up his mind whether to believe his boss or not. Finally he said, "It looks suspicious, all the same."

Dude laughed and said, "Be sensible, Mike, if I had, to use your phrase, 'shacked up' with Lynn or anyone else would I be foolish enough to drive right up to my own office so everyone could know it?"

As they left the diner, Mike made one final observa-

tion. "Bea believes it, and if Jackie were here I think she would believe it, too."

"I can't help what Bea believes," he said icily, "and Jackie would never believe anything as ridiculous as that."

Captain Haley was waiting in the ward office when they returned. He smiled broadly and extended his big hand to Dude and said, "Ready?"

The conversation on the ride out to suburban Berwyn was limited to speculation on the outcome of their offer to Jack Sullivan. Captain Haley sounded very optimistic, now that the ward committeeman had decided to join forces with him.

Roberta Ashton, Sullivan's maiden aunt, was a tall emaciated-looking woman in her late sixties, with a hawk-like nose and small, beady eyes set very close together. She answered the door in faded flowered housecoat, fastened with an oversized safety pin. She frowned when she saw Haley. "Oh, it's you again! What do you want now? Haven't you caused that poor boy enough grief, already?"

The captain said, "I'm sorry to bother you again, Miss Ashton, but it was at Mr. Sullivan's own request. This is Mr. Brennan, a friend of your nephew's."

She looked at Dude and said, "I've read about you in the newspapers." Then defiantly: "He's sleeping."

Captain Haley said bluntly, "It's almost twelve-thirty. I am going to have to insist that you wake him up. May we come in?"

"All right!" she said nastily. "It's a rotten shame the way you people are hounding that boy. He's very sensitive and will probably become ill over this silly business." She left the two men standing in the living room and disappeared down the hall.

"Friendly, isn't she," Haley said, grinning.

"Yeah. Like a rattlesnake," Dude answered.

In a few minutes she returned. "He must have taken

a sleeping pill. His door is locked, so I can't get in to wake him."

The two men looked at each other, then the captain asked, "Is it possible that he could have gone out earlier, maybe before you got up this morning?"

She shook her head and said, "No. He's in there."

"Which side of the house is his room on and which would be his window?"

The woman was visibly frightened. "The left side, the fourth window, counting the bathroom window. What's wrong?"

"I don't know," the captain said, then to Dude: "You take a look in the bedroom window. I'll see if I can raise him."

Dude nodded and hurried out. He located the bedroom window. It was locked. The shade was drawn almost all of the way down, but there was enough space between the shade and the windowsill to obtain a partial view of the inside. He cupped his hands over his eyes to cut down on the glare of the sun shining on the windowpane and peered in. His heart skipped a beat.

A foot or so from the window was an overturned chair. About fifteen inches above the floor he saw the naked legs and feet of a man. They were motionless.

Dude took out a handkerchief and wrapped it around the knuckles of his left hand and punched a hole in the glass. He reached up and twisted the lock flange and pushed the window open. He hoisted himself up onto the sill, swung his legs over, and was in the room. He could hear the captain pounding on the door, but for the moment he was mesmerized by the sight before him.

Jack Sullivan stared accusingly at Dude out of sightless, bulging eyes. His face was swollen and a sickening purplish color. The protruding tongue was also swollen and almost black. He was wearing only his pajama bottoms. And he looked like some grotesque mannequin suspended in the air.

Dude saw the length of clothesline tied around the doorknob, looped over the top of the open closet door

and down behind Jack's head. He could only see a part of the rope around Jack's throat because the swelling in his neck folded the flesh around it.

Finally he heard Haley calling his name, and quickly went to the bedroom door and unlocked it. He opened it only a few inches so that the woman could not see the body. Dude whispered to the captain: "Suicide."

"Please step into the other room, Miss Ashton," Haley said softly.

"What's happened? Why can't I go in there?" Her voice was suddenly trembling and high-pitched.

Captain Haley grasped the spinster's shoulders and said, "Your nephew has taken his own life, I'm afraid."

She stared unbelievably at him then screamed, "No!" hysterically. Wild-eyed, she tried to get past the captain, screaming at Dude, "He lies! I want to see my little boy. What have you done to him?"

Dude squeezed through the small opening and closed the door behind him, still holding fast to the doorknob in case the woman tried to enter. The two men led the struggling woman out of the hallway and back into the living room and set her down on the sofa.

Gently, Dude said, "You want to remember him as you last saw him, Miss Ashton, not the way he looks now."

Her hysteria passed and she began sobbing quietly. The two men looked at each other and nodded: neither thought she would now attempt to gain entry to the death room. Captain Haley nodded toward a telephone on the hall table. "Call the Berwyn Police Department while I take a look in there. I'll lock the door from the outside until the coroner gets here."

"Okay," Dude said. "How about if I can find out from her if she's friendly with any of her neighbors and maybe have them come over to stay with her or have them take her out of here?"

"Good idea, but wait till I get back before you leave the house."

Dude phoned the local police, identified himself, and

explained what had happened. He was told the homicide team and the medical examiner would be there soon.

When he returned to the living room, he was startled to find that the woman was no longer crying. She seemed to have regained control of herself, and her voice sounded normal when she said, "You finally drove him to it! You must be satisfied with yourselves, you and that Captain Bailey or Daley or whatever his name is!" Then she added bitterly, "Now that whore he called his wife won't have to bother humiliating him in a divorce court."

"If it's all right with you, Miss Ashton, I'll inform Mrs. Sullivan of this."

She glared at Dude with utter hatred in her eyes and said, "That's fine with me. I never want to speak to her again! It's just as much her fault as yours!"

Captain Haley appeared in the doorway and said, "I'd like to speak to you for a moment, Dude."

Dude strode across the room to the captain's side. "I called the police. They should be here any minute."

"Thanks," Haley answered. "You know, Conforti must have really put the fear of God into that man to make him do a thing like this. I was looking through some of his personal effects and found an envelope containing five thousand dollars. There's no question in my mind that when he saw Conforti last night he gave him the money to shut Jack up. I see no other explanation, do you?"

Dude shook his head. "What story are you going to give homicide?"

"There's no point in telling them about his involvement with Conforti. His aunt doesn't know anything, so I believe we can get away with saying you knew about his pending divorce and were trying to negotiate some sort of reconciliation, but when we got here it was too late. Since there was no note we can officially say that he was despondent over marital difficulties and took his own life. I'll get that money now and you can give it to Lynn. It will be hard enough for me to explain my presence here

without having them start an investigation over the money."

Dude said, "I'm going to call Mayor Whalen and have him keep her in the office until I can get there and tell her. I don't want her to hear it from some nosy newspaper reporter. I'll have my chauffeur shoot out here to pick me up. How long do you think I'll have to stick around?"

"Just long enough to give them your statement about discovering the body and your knowledge of the marital situation. I'm going to tell homicide that originally you and I were on our way out to Joliet, that I needed your help on an investigation, and that you asked me to stop by here on our way."

Dude nodded his agreement and said, "Better get that money, and I'll get on the phone."

Dude called Whalen's private number. The mayor answered immediately, saying only, "Yes?"

"This is Dude, Jim," he said. He seldom used the mayor's first name. "Are you alone?"

"No."

"Is Lynn there with you?"

"No."

"Has she gone to lunch yet?"

"Yes."

"It's almost one, do you expect her back by one or thereabouts?"

"Yes."

"Okay. When she returns call her into your office and keep her busy with dictation until I get there. Don't let anyone see or talk to her. I'll try and be there within the hour."

Whalen was silent for a moment, then asked, "Are you going to tell me what's going on?"

"I'm at Jack Sullivan's aunt's home in Berwyn. Sully hanged himself sometime during the night."

Dude could hear the mayor suck in his breath and whistle softly. "Jesus Christ! Will the police or the papers get wind of why you were there?" he asked.

"I don't think so, Jim," Dude said slowly. "Haley is here with me and we have a pretty good story for the local police. But you've got to keep Lynn incommunicado until I can explain the situation to her and tell her what to say if anyone gets nosy."

"I understand." Then quickly, he said, "The party you made reference to has just returned. I'll attend to the matter at once."

While Dude was calling Mike, Haley handed him the envelope containing the five thousand dollars, and said, "Dude, I'll let you have my car to get back to town and I'll get one of my men to pick me up."

Dude placed his palm over the mouthpiece just as Bea answered. "Good!" Then Dude said into the receiver, "Something has come up, Bea. I can't possibly get back there before five or six o'clock. If anyone calls—and I mean anyone—you don't know where I am or when I'll be back. Do you understand?"

"Yes," she said, sounding concerned. "Is anything wrong?"

"Plenty. You'll probably hear about it before I get back." He hung up before she could answer.

Four detectives from the Berwyn homicide unit and a doctor from the coroner's office had already arrived when Dude reentered the living room. Captain Haley started to escort them to the bedroom when he spied Dude. "Mr. Brennan, this is Lieutenant Albritton and Sergeant Adams; they are to be in charge of the investigation. You can give them your statement after they have a look at the scene."

"I'll be in the living room when you're ready," Dude said to the lieutenant.

Nearly three quarters of an hour passed before Dude had given his statement and was allowed to leave.

He parked the squad car in a no-parking zone in front of City Hall and raced up to the fifth floor. Only one of the uniformed policemen was sitting in the mayor's outer

office. Dude nodded to the officer, and asked, "Is Lynn still in with the mayor?"

"Yes, sir," the policeman replied. "Steve is handling the phones in her office. Go right on in, Mr. Brennan, the mayor is expecting you."

Dude passed through Lynn's office, waved to the other patrolman without stopping, and walked directly into Whalen's office. The mayor was seated behind his massive desk, and Lynn was sitting opposite him holding her stenographer's notepad. When Whalen saw Dude he looked relieved, and said, "If you will excuse me, I have to go down the hall. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Lynn turned and looked questioningly at Dude.

He walked behind the chair in which she sat and put his hands on her shoulders. He could feel a shiver run through her. "Lynn . . . there is no easy way to say what I have to say." He felt her go rigid beneath his touch. "Jack committed suicide—he hanged himself some time early this morning."

She didn't move. She sat there and stared at the wall. Dude felt helpless standing there, his hands on this woman with whom he had been making love only hours before, not knowing what to say that would or could erase their guilt. After what seemed hours, she asked, "When? I've got to know when, Dude."

He knew exactly why she wanted to know. He was evasive. "What difference does it make, Lynn? Nothing either of us could have done would have prevented him from doing it."

"When?" she asked persistently.

He realized that nothing would pacify her until he told her what she wanted to know. "The medical examiner placed the time somewhere between midnight and two in the morning."

She let out a small gasp and said, "My God! That's when you and I—" She couldn't finish the sentence. She placed her hands over her face and wept convulsively for several minutes. When the tears were spent, she wiped her eyes with a handkerchief she took from the sleeve of

her blouse. Dude walked around the chair to face her, took her hands, and drew her up to a standing position. She tried to pull her hands free, but failed. They stood inches apart for a moment or two, then without looking into his eyes, she went limp in his arms. He could feel her face nestled under his chin.

"What am I going to do, Dude?" she asked in a small voice.

"First of all, honey," he said quietly, "I think Haley and I convinced the police out there that he did it because he was having marital difficulties. He still had the five grand, so apparently Conforti refused to accept it. I figure Conforti must have threatened Jack so badly that he could not face it. We saw no reason to let anyone know about his dealings with Conforti so I took the money with me."

She stood back and looked up at him out of her china-blue eyes. "What am I going to tell the children?"

"Well," he said slowly, "obviously you can't tell the twins anything. If I recall correctly, Jeff is fourteen now and Linda is twelve. They are going to have to be told, but there's no sense in telling them the whole truth. You will have to go along with the story we told the police. It's going to be in the papers and they are bound to see it."

She put her arms around his waist and clung to him desperately and began to tremble. He held her close to him until the shivering subsided. When her breathing became regular again, she said, "I can't do it alone, Dude. Would you come with me?"

The last thing he wanted to do was to face her children and tell them of their father's death, but he said to her, "Of course I will."

She looked at him and shook her head. "Why are you so good to me, Dude? I know that you aren't in love with me. Do you feel guilty about last night?"

He did not know how to answer her. He suspected that anything he would now say would be wrong, but he had to say something. "We have nothing to be ashamed of,

Lynn. I have no regrets and neither should you. We both tried to help Jack, but he was too deeply involved. He did it: it had nothing to do with us."

She put her head on his chest and said, "I was in love with you last night and I think I still am. Am I so wrong to be thinking this way, with Jack lying dead somewhere?"

He tilted her head up and kissed her. "No, honey, we'll talk about it again when this is all over. Right now we have a pretty difficult time ahead of us." And he thought, Mike was right. I am an all-American bastard.

The mayor rapped on the door, then entered the room. He walked over to Lynn, put his arms around her, and said, "I'm so sorry, Lynn. Is there anything I can do?"

She shook her head, then said to both of them: "I'll have to call my mother and have her bring the children back to my house as soon as they get home from school. She lives only two blocks away."

While she was in her own office, Dude told Whalen everything that had taken place. When Dude finished, Whalen said, "I don't want any publicity about this. Above all, I don't want my name mentioned other than to say that Lynn is my secretary."

"Don't worry, Haley and I took care of everything," Dude said, and thought angrily, You fat bastard, you would throw her to the wolves in a minute if you thought you might get a little unfavorable publicity.

Lynn returned to the mayor's office and handed Dude the keys to her car. "Will you drive me home?" she asked.

On the way out Dude gave the squad car keys to one of the uniformed officers and asked him to return it to central headquarters, explaining that it was Captain Haley's car. The policeman accepted the keys and said, "Consider it done, Mr. Brennan."

When they arrived at her home it was nearly four o'clock. Lynn was surprised that her mother was not there with the children. They sat on the living-room sofa, waiting. "Did you tell your mother what happened?"

"I had to. She knew all about Jack's gambling. What

she didn't know about was his involvement with Conforti. I had to tell her about that because she knows that he would never have killed himself over our marriage breaking up."

"Do you think she has already told the children?" he asked.

"I don't know. It's possible. She's a strong woman and would be able to break it to them much easier than I ever could."

Dude took her hand in his and said, "Honey, I hate to bring it up now, but do you want me to make the funeral arrangements? It has to be done. There will have to be an autopsy, but I think they will be able to hold the wake by tomorrow evening."

"Would you, Dude? I'm going to have my hands full. Guess O'Keefe's would be all right, it's not too far away."

"Don't worry," he said, patting her hand. "I'll take care of everything."

She jumped up and cried out, "Oh, my God, they're here!"

Her mother's car was pulling into the driveway. He took her arm and said firmly, "Don't go to pieces now, Lynn, you will be able to handle everything just fine."

Irene Wells, Lynn's mother, was a handsome woman about the same age as Roberta Ashton. There the similarity ended. Irene was well groomed and retained her good looks. What a difference between her and Jack's aunt, Dude thought as she walked toward the house, with Lynn's son Jeff on one side, and her daughter Linda on the other, holding their grandmother's hands. The little twins were nowhere in sight and Dude concluded that she must have left them with a neighbor. He turned to Lynn and said, "She's already told them."

The color had drained from Lynn's face and she looked as if she were going to faint. "Sit down," he ordered. She obeyed meekly. Mrs. Wells and the children entered the room, hesitated for a moment, then the children ran to their mother and threw their arms around her; all three were crying.

Dude felt awkward and was about to leave when

Lynn's mother came to him and offered him her hand. "I'm Irene Wells," she said smoothly. "You must be Mr. Brennan."

He smiled and shook her hand and said, "Yes. But please call me Dude; everyone else does."

"All right, Dude," she said, "let's go out into the kitchen. There's a bottle of bourbon there and I believe I could stand a drink. How about you?"

"Thank you. You won't have to ask me a second time." Dude liked this woman and thought Lynn was right. Here was a strong woman who knew how to handle herself.

When they were in the kitchen, she said, "Please sit down. I'll fix the drinks." He nodded and sat down at the kitchen table. He watched her take a bottle of bourbon down from one of the cabinets, fill two glasses with ice cubes, and pour about two ounces of whiskey over the ice. It figures, he thought, she drinks her liquor straight. Before she reached the table he was out of his seat and holding a chair for her. She smiled and thanked him, then handed him the drink.

"Lynn told me that you discovered my son-in-law's body. I want to thank you for the splendid way you handled breaking the news to my daughter. You are a very considerate man."

"I've known Lynn a long time and only did what any friend might do," he said, then added: "I think you did far more by saving her the anguish of telling the children."

"Thank you," she said, then took a thin silver cigarette case from her purse, and held a cigarette to her lips while Dude fumbled for a match. When he had lit it for her she said, "You are far too modest, Dude. I know you gave Jack five thousand dollars to pay off some gambler. Does that also come under the heading of friendship?"

Dude suddenly didn't like the trend of the conversation. "What are you driving at, Mrs. Wells?"

She smiled at him and said, too sweetly, "Call me Irene. I think you know what I mean."

Dude looked at her contemptuously and said in a low, menacing voice, "Your son-in-law was mixed up with one

of the most vicious racketeers in the country. A man who would think nothing of having you killed or maimed for life if you looked cross-eyed at him. He got so tangled up with this gangster—Conforti is his name and don't tell me that you've never heard of him—that Jack started stealing confidential information from Lynn and using it to pay his gambling debts. The last tidbit damn near got me thrown in jail. If he hadn't told your daughter about it I wouldn't be here now. Sure, I gave him the five thousand. If I hadn't some harm would certainly have come to Lynn or the children or both. I don't think you have very much respect for your daughter or you wouldn't have brought me out here to make dirty little insinuations."

Dude poured himself another shot and set the bottle down without refilling her glass.

She looked at Dude earnestly. "I didn't know all that was involved, Mr. Brennan. To be quite frank, your reputation leaves quite a bit to be desired, and I thoroughly disliked you long before I came here today and met you. When my daughter told me you gave her all that money to give to Jack I jumped to the conclusion that you wanted her as repayment. I am ashamed. Will you forgive me?"

Dude poured a drink for her, smiled, and said, "It's already forgotten." He held his glass up and said, "To becoming good friends."

She touched her glass to his. Lynn came into the kitchen, red-eyed, with an arm around each of the children. Dude stood up. "You kids remember Mr. Brennan, don't you?"

They nodded and Dude said, "Hi, Jeff, Linda." Then he asked Lynn: "May I use your phone? I want to have Mike pick me up."

Irene said, "Let me drive you where you are going, Dude."

Lynn put her hand on his arm and said, "Please let Mother take you, Dude. I'd like you both to become better acquainted."

Dude laughed and winked at Lynn's mother and said,

"We've gotten to know each other quite well already. I will take you up on your offer, Irene."

After they were in the car Dude told Irene to drive to O'Keefe's where she could sign the release for her daughter so that the funeral director could pick up the body after the autopsy was performed.

While they were there Dude decided they might as well get everything done. They selected the casket and while Irene was giving John O'Keefe's secretary the necessary information for the obituaries, Dude went into O'Keefe's office and gave him twenty-five hundred dollars to cover the cost of the funeral and told him that if anyone should ask just to say everything was taken care of, but not by whom.

It was nearly six when Lynn's mother dropped him off in front of his office. He thanked her and started to get out of the car.

"You are a pretty nice guy, Dude."

He shrugged and said, "Tell Lynn I'll call her later."

He walked in, not bothering to speak to Bea and Mike, sat down at his desk wearily, and rubbed his eyes. He had a splitting headache.

Bea said softly, "Mike and I just saw it in the paper. I called Lynn to see if there was anything we could do and she told me everything that happened today. I'm sorry for what I was thinking this morning, Dude."

"I am too, chief," Mike said in his gruff voice.

Dude nodded and rubbed his eyes again. "Mike," he said, "now that it's getting dark earlier every day, I want you to drive Bea home after work from now on."

"Will do, chief. Do you want me for anything this evening?"

"I don't think so. If I do, can I call you at home?"

"Sure." Mike grinned. "A couple of guys are coming over to play cards so I'll be in all night."

Bea looked at Dude and said, "I'll bet you haven't had a thing to eat all day, have you?"

He frowned and said, "I met Lynn for breakfast this morning and that was it." He looked innocently at her knowing that the lie reinforced what he had told Mike that morning.

She smiled. "Let me run next door and get you a sandwich and a cup of coffee—"

"I'll do it," interrupted Mike.

"Maybe just a cup of coffee, Mike," he said. When Mike was gone he asked, "Were you able to finish that list of relievers today, Bea?"

She took some papers from the middle drawer of her desk and handed them to him. "All finished, Dude, I knew you needed them for the ward meeting tomorrow night."

"Thanks, Princess," he said, forgetting that he had no longer wanted to call her that. "How about doing me a favor?"

"You don't have to ask."

"Call John O'Keefe around seven tonight. He said he would contact St. Brendan's and arrange the Rosary service and the Mass for Jack. Then call Lynn and let her know."

"I'll take care of it." She gave him a copy of the Red Streak Edition of the *Examiner*. Mike returned with the coffee before he could read the story on Jack, and Dude suggested he take Bea home. They left, and Dude locked the office door behind them. He propped his feet up on one corner of his desk and picked up the newspaper.

JOHN SULLIVAN FOUND DEAD

John Justin Sullivan, husband of Lynn Sullivan, personal secretary to Mayor James Whalen, was found dead early today in the home of his aunt, Miss Roberta Ashton of Berwyn.

Mr. Sullivan, it was reported, had been despondent over marital difficulties. He hanged himself shortly after midnight according to Deputy Coroner Miles Anderson.

Mr. Sullivan is survived by his wife, Lynn; a son,

Jeff; a daughter, Linda; and twin daughters, Pamela and Michele.

Dude was pleased by the article. Captain Haley had done a masterful job at keeping names out of the story.

He decided it was time he called Maude. When she came on the line, she said, "I'm glad you called, Dude. I had a long talk with Dr. Kessell today, and I guess Jackie is becoming quite a problem to him."

Dude removed his feet from the desk. "What is the trouble?"

"She wants to leave," Maude said.

"What do you mean she wants to leave?" Dude asked, startled.

"She's going through the worst of the withdrawal now and she doesn't want to go on with it."

"Is Ben allowing her to have any phone calls yet?"

"No. He said he had to have the phone taken out of her room. He wants you to talk with her as soon as you can."

He glanced at his watch, and said, "It's too late for me to get out there tonight. Tomorrow."

"Let me know how she is and see if the doctor will let her talk to Kimmie. The poor little thing can't understand why she can't talk to Jackie."

"Okay, Maude," he said, and hesitated before he asked, "Have you heard about Jack Sullivan?"

"No. What happened?"

"He committed suicide last night."

"Oh, no! Poor Lynn! I'll give her a ring and see if there is anything I can do."

"She'll like that. She's always liked you, Maude."

"I'll call her now and talk to you tomorrow."

A few minutes later, Dude switched off the office lights and left for his apartment.

When he got home he took off his coat and vest, loosened his tie, and stretched out on the couch. He fell asleep almost immediately and slept soundly for the rest of the night.

Chapter 7

Dude arrived early at the office, before eight o'clock, refreshed from an ice-cold shower, and feeling splendid after almost twelve hours uninterrupted sleep. At his desk he unfolded his newspaper. The bold headline startled him, and he shot to an upright position in his swivel chair.

STATE'S ATTORNEY ACCUSED OF FRAUD

Dude quickly went to one of three file cabinets against the wall behind Bea's desk and unlocked the middle one. He opened the bottom drawer and took out a thick manila folder labeled "State Attorney's Office".

He returned to his desk with the folder and riffled through the contents until he found what he wanted. He removed two typewritten sheets, closed the folder, placed it and the two documents to one side, and resumed reading the newspaper.

CONTINGENCY FUND DRAINED OF NEARLY HALF-MILLION DOLLARS

**By
Morton Savage
Staff Writer**

At a hastily called press conference late last night, James Morrissey, reform candidate for the office of state's attorney, announced that an audit had been conducted in the state's attorney's office at the in-

sistence of Republican Attorney General, Andrew Krebs.

Morrissey charged that incumbent State Attorney William Brannigan, a Democrat, had diverted funds from his contingency fund and used the money for office parties, trips to Miami for some members of his staff, and cash bonuses to investigators and prosecutors assigned to the criminal division.

The contingency fund is a special account set up for the specific purpose of paying the hotel and food bills for witnesses in criminal cases, who for various reasons must be secreted before and during trials. It is also used to pay informers for information in criminal investigations.

The account, according to Morrissey, was directly handled by Brannigan, and while most of the checks drafted on the account were easily traced to uses other than for official purposes, there was a large number of checks that were made out to cash. These checks varied in amounts ranging from five hundred dollars to one for eight thousand dollars, and could not be traced.

An employee of the state's attorney's who requested that his name be withheld insisted that paid informers were never given more than fifty dollars, and that the average amount was twenty-five. When asked if it were possible that an informer might receive five hundred dollars or more, he laughed.

At the press conference Morrissey read, from a list furnished to him by the auditors, some names of business firms that had received checks from the account in the last two years. Several checks went to liquor stores and catering services, before Christmas of last year and the year before. Checks made out to one travel agency coincided with vacation trips to Miami made by Brannigan and some of his staff.

All checks from the contingency fund were signed

by the state's attorney himself and needed no counter-signatures.

In a fiery denunciation, Morrissey labeled State's Attorney Brannigan "a thief of public money and of public trust," and said that a full investigation into the matter would be conducted by the attorney general's office.

Neither Mayor Whalen nor Mr. Brannigan could be reached for comment.

There were several related stories, but they were more or less a rehash of the lead article, so he put the newspaper aside and picked up the two sheets he had taken from the file folder.

One was headed "Civil Division" and the other, "Criminal Division." The second list contained the names, addresses, phone numbers, and job titles of the people working in the state's attorney's office's criminal division who were sponsored out of his ward.

For the time being he ignored all the stenographers, typists, and file clerks. He had sponsored five prosecutors, and all but one lived outside of the ward in the suburbs. He next studied the names of the eight investigators: all of them lived in the ward. On a pad he wrote the names of all thirteen, with their home phone numbers.

Next he leafed through the file folder and took out thirteen letters: undated letters of resignation typed up in Dude's office and signed by each man on the day they reported to work for Brannigan.

He returned the file folder to the cabinet. A few moments later, he saw Mike pull up in the Packard with Bea seated beside him. Mike brought with him all of the morning editions of the papers. "After I saw the headlines, I figured you would want these."

Dude smiled. "Thanks, Mike, you're a prince."

Bea was standing near her desk. She took off the pert hat that matched her blue suit. She smoothed her honey-blond hair and said to Dude, "It looks as though the you-know-what has hit the fan."

"We're going to be in for a hell of a time now. If the election were held tomorrow Morrissey would be a shoo-in," he replied, "and he would drag a lot of others in with him who are hanging on his coattails, including that guy Keegan who wants to be alderman of this ward."

Mike said, "The investigation they want will never be finished before the election. There isn't time. Brannigan is going to throw up as many roadblocks as he can."

Dude shook his head. "Right now everything hinges on what the mayor decides. Who knows? He might insist that Brannigan resign."

He picked up the newspapers he had not yet seen. The second paper contained no additional revelations. However, the third paper listed the names of three prosecutors and three investigators who were directly linked to the Miami trips. Two of the three prosecutors, and all three of those investigators were from his ward.

"Sonofabitch!" he yelled, so loudly that Bea actually jumped out of her chair. He looked at the startled girl and said, "I'm sorry honey, I didn't mean to holler."

She swallowed and asked, "What was that for?"

Instead of answering, Dude handed her the newspaper and pointed to the paragraph that had upset him.

He put a check mark next to the names on the pad that were mentioned in the article, then reached for his phone and gave the operator Mayor Whalen's private number.

The city leader was fuming, and shouted into the receiver, "Yeah?"

Dude held the instrument away from his ear, saying, "I gather you have read all the juicy details concerning catching our illustrious state's attorney's finger in the pie."

The mayor snapped, "You think you can be smart-alecky? Wait until they start getting on your ass, buster. All but one of them come out of your ward."

"Agreed. But the final tally isn't in yet. I won't be responsible for any more than anyone else."

"Cut the crap and get down here! Now!" Whalen yelled, and hung up.

Dude tore the sheet from the notepad and folded it

around the two employee lists and the letters of resignation and put everything in a large envelope. He stood up, and grinning at Mike, said, "I have to go downtown now and atone for my sins."

Bea laughed and said "Good luck" as he and Mike walked out the door.

Dude was surprised when he walked into the mayor's office. Besides the mayor, the only other person present was Danny Maher, Whalen's chief in charge of patronage.

"Don't sit down," Whalen said. "We're all leaving right away." Dude watched the Mayor stuff some papers into a briefcase. When he finished, he and Maher started for the door and Dude followed.

When they were seated in the mayor's Lincoln, Whalen told his detective-chauffeur to drive them to the Richmond-Carlton Hotel on Chicago's Far South Side. Then he said to Dude, "I've got Brannigan, and his chief of the civil division and the chief of the criminal division stashed away in a suite down there."

"That's nice," Dude commented dryly. "Are you planning on keeping them there until this whole thing blows over?"

Whalen stared at Dude for some time, then remarked acidly, "You have been walking on some pretty thin ice lately, son. If I were you, instead of trying to act the court jester, I would buckle down to party business. You have been my close confidant a long time. Don't wear out your welcome."

Dude felt uneasy at the mayor's tone of voice, and replied quietly, "I'm sorry, Jim. Don't worry about this Brannigan business; we'll work something out. There is no way you will be left holding the bag while I'm around. In fact, why don't you let me and Danny handle this? There's no need for you to be there."

Whalen smiled and said, "Now you are talking like the Dude Brennan I know. But I think my authority is needed to dealing with this situation. By the way, Dude,

you and Haley handled the Sullivan matter in an extraordinary manner. Keeping your names out of the papers and covering up the Conforti connection was best for all concerned."

Dude nodded and said, "Thank you, sir, but I'm afraid most of the credit goes to Captain Haley. He was the one who handled the Berwyn police and the boys from the medical examiner's office."

"Nonsense. If you hadn't been there to supply an excuse for Haley's presence, he would have been caught with his pants down."

The Richmond-Carlton was the second largest hotel in the city and occupied a full city block on plush South Shore Drive. Mayor Whalen had gone to high school with Bob Gavin, the manager and part owner of the hotel. Gavin met them at the door and escorted them to a waiting elevator that whisked them up to the fifteenth floor. When the elevator doors opened, the manager said, "Suite 1501." And went back down alone in the car.

The mayor led the way and walked into the suite without knocking. Dude was the last to enter, and closed the door behind him and surveyed the surroundings. The room was very large and several extra chairs had been added for their convenience. There was a large dining-room table at one side. Two hallways led off either end of the parlor to bedrooms.

The state's attorney and his two aides were huddled together in conference in front of the enormous bay window that overlooked Lake Michigan. When the trio entered the room, Brannigan and his men immediately stopped talking and stood up.

Whalen sat down in silence in one of the chairs on the side, turning it to face four others. Dude and Maher sat on the couch, next to the chair the mayor occupied.

The mayor took a cigar from his vest pocket and made an elaborate ceremony of lighting it. Then, after taking several exaggerated puffs, he said, "Please sit down, gentlemen."

The state's attorney and his two departmental super-

visors, realizing that they had made an error in failing to select seats out of the line of fire before the mayor arrived, were now forced to sit side by side directly opposite him. Whalen patiently waited for them to seat themselves before launching his first salvo at State's Attorney Brannigan. "Couldn't keep your snout out of the trough, could you, Bill?" And without waiting for a reply, went on. "Just merrily dipping your fingers in the till and not a thought to covering your tracks. That is what I call brilliant!"

Brannigan was obviously terrified of Whalen. Small beads of perspiration formed on his forehead and upper lip. His face was ashen as he stammered, "I can explain everything. I can justify the things I did. I have the proof right here with me."

"Horseshit!" Whalen said vehemently. "You couldn't justify sitting on the toilet, you ignoramus."

Now, almost panic-stricken, Brannigan pleaded, "You could at least let me show you some of my records." He pulled a briefcase from the hands of the head of the criminal division of his office, and began fumbling among the papers.

"Shut your lying mouth and quit that squirming around!" the mayor said harshly, then turned his attention to the other two men. Clark Boston, chief of the civil division, did not appear in the least bit disturbed. If anything, he seemed mildly amused at his boss's discomfort. Watching him, Dude thought, He's not a bit worried. Probably was smart enough to refuse anything that baboon Brannigan offered him.

On the other hand, Warren Powell, the chief of the criminal division, sat nervously and wore such a look of guilt on his face that if the situation had not been so serious Dude would have burst out laughing.

The mayor again took several puffs on his cigar. "What is your story, Mr. Boston?"

"No story at all, Mr. Mayor. I, and my department, have had no connection with the contingency fund. That belongs strictly to the criminal division and Mr. Powell

and Mr. Brannigan. I have never accepted either for myself or for any one of my employees any check or cash drawn from that account. Nor have we been the guests of anyone using money from the account to take trips. I have never attended any of the Christmas parties and I have always forbidden my people to attend them. I have never accepted a cash bonus, although from time to time bonuses were offered me. I believe I can safely say that none of the people working for me have ever accepted any bonuses either. In short, Mr. Mayor, my hands are clean."

It was plain that Brannigan was totally unprepared for the statements his aide made and stared at him, open-mouthed, as if Boston were Benedict Arnold.

Whalen smiled warmly and said, "Thank you, Mr. Boston, there is no doubt in my mind that you have told me the truth."

The state's attorney nearly choked.

Unsmiling, the mayor turned to the criminal-division supervisor and inquired, "That just leaves you, Mr. Powell. What is your contribution in the way of justification for the charges that have been leveled against Mr. Brannigan?"

Powell folded his arms somewhat defiantly and said, in an unsure voice, "I think I should talk to my attorney before I make any statements or answer any questions."

Brannigan looked as though he were going to strangle his employee. Instead, he screamed, "I put you in that job when you were running after ambulances and living off your wife because you couldn't support yourself. You'll not run out on me now, and you won't go chasing after some lawyer to tell you what to do! By God, I'll tell you what to do!"

Powell was livid and shot back—"And you also got me into this goddamn mess! I promise you that if I go to jail, you'll go under it!"

Whalen was amused. "All right, shut up both of you. I am going to ask you only once more, Mr. Powell. What do you know of this business?"

The chief criminal prosecutor knew that he and his

boss were in over their heads, but he also knew that at least he had never signed any of the incriminating checks, so he decided to try to shift the entire blame on Brannigan. "I only did what Mr. Brannigan told me to do. None of those checks were made out to me. Nothing can be traced to me, sir."

"The hell it can't!" Brannigan informed his aide disgustedly.

Powell just shook his head, and looked miserable.

Whalen eyed them both for several minutes, defying either of them to open their mouths. He abruptly rose and walked to where Dude and Danny were seated. "Do either of you have any suggestions as to what we can do to save the hides of those two?" he asked, pointing a forefinger at Brannigan and Powell.

Dude suggested, "I think before we start digging into anything else we had better find out who else is involved besides the six named in the newspapers."

Danny Maher took a loose-leaf notebook from his briefcase and said, "Here are the names of everyone employed at the state's attorney's office. I'll sit down with Brannigan and Powell and we'll go over each name until we get an accurate roster of every person involved."

The mayor agreed and told Danny to get started. Then he turned to Dude and asked, in a low voice, "Do you see any reason to keep Boston around? As far as I'm concerned, he's clean."

Dude took out a cigarette. When he had it lit, he said, "I'll send him on his way and tell him to give the no-comment routine to anyone who questions him. But I don't think he ought to go into his office today. I'll advise him to stay out of sight today and tomorrow."

Dude waited until the mayor had crossed the room to where Maher, Brannigan, and Powell were grouped around the table before approaching Clark Boston. The civil-division chief grinned and held up a hand. "Don't say it, Dude, let me guess. Go, and sin no more; stay away from reporters and the county and criminal court build-

ings and if anyone should corner me, tell them 'no comment' until they get tired of hearing it. Right?"

"You must be a lip reader," Dude said, laughing; then he added seriously, "Are you positive that none of your people are involved?"

Boston thought for a moment then said, "Don't forget, Dude, the offices of the civil branch are in the county building, not out at Twenty-sixth and California. The only time that crowd comes to see us is when they want a favor. No, my people have all been with me since before those two got into office and I'm sure of them." They shook hands at the door and Boston left.

Dude went to the phone and called room service and ordered coffee and Danish for six, figuring someone would finish the extras. Next, he placed a person-to-person call to Ben Kessell. The doctor told him that Jackie's attitude had improved remarkably since the previous day. He had had the phone put back, and she had talked to her daughter. Dude asked him to tell Jackie that he had intended to drive out but that he would be tied up for the rest of the day in an unexpected meeting. He would call her that evening without fail. His third call was to his office: he gave Bea his number in case something urgent came up, but warned her not to tell anyone where he was, who he was with, or to give the phone number out to anyone under any circumstances.

Room service knocked on the door. Dude let the waiter in with his cart, tipped him, and sent him away before he could see any of the other occupants of the suite. Only Brannigan refused nourishment, and a look at the man's pallor convinced Dude that he was displaying good judgment. Not wanting to disturb the work that was being done at the table, Dude nudged the mayor and they took their coffee into one of the bedrooms and closed the door.

For the first time in his long acquaintance with the city's political ruler, Dude saw that he was really worried. There was no mistaking the look on his face.

"I think we are in plenty of trouble, son. It will take a miracle to clear those two, much less God knows how

many others that may be implicated one way or another."

Dude set the coffee cup and saucer on the nightstand, rose and walked to the window, and stood with his hands in his hip pockets staring down at the traffic below on busy South Shore Drive. It was several minutes before he answered the mayor. He finally turned and, leaning against the windowsill, said, "We don't yet know the whole story. Brannigan insists he has records with him that explain everything. Maybe so; maybe not. But I wouldn't start doing any serious worrying until we put all the pieces together and see the whole picture. Do you know if they brought all their records with them or if some of the stuff is still at Twenty-sixth Street?"

Whalen said, "They have three briefcases with them now. When I talked to Brannigan last night I insisted he go to his office and pick up every scrap of paper that dealt in any way with that frigging account. The only things they couldn't lay their hands on were the checks themselves. The state auditors turned them over to the attorney general's investigators. If this thing blows up in our faces, Dude, we will lose that office to Morrissey, and probably quite a few other offices too. You read what Morrissey had to say about you the other day? He wants your hide next."

"I'm no Bill Brannigan, Jim. All Morrissey can do is holler and thump his chest. There isn't a thing about me he can make a case out of and he damn sure knows it," Dude said, smiling, trying to restore a little of the mayor's confidence.

Before Whalen could comment, Dude snapped his fingers and said, "Look Jim, you can't disappear all day without drawing suspicion. You are going to have to face the press in your office, and the sooner the better. Let me have Bea come up here and she and I can sift through all of the junk that Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum hauled along with them. I imagine it will take at least the rest of the day, and in all probability half the night."

Whalen agreed immediately. "You're right, son. Call down and tell Gavin to tell Art Farrell to bring my car

around. It's in the hotel garage so no one would get nosy and wonder what I'm doing here."

Dude arranged that, and the mayor, on the way out, said, "I'll call you periodically throughout the day." Dude nodded.

Bea's voice on the phone was pleasant. "What's up, boss?"

"Listen, Princess," he said, and thought, I'll call her that if I want, to hell with it. "Grab five or six legal pads, a dozen pencils and your steno pad and meet me in the lobby of the Richmond-Carlton as soon as you can. Take a cab and I'll pay for it on this end. For God's sake, don't tell anyone where you are going, not even Mike. Destroy the phone number I gave you earlier if you haven't already done it. Tell Mike to take care of the office for you. I'll call him sometime later on in the day. Got that straight?"

"On my way," she replied, and hung up.

Dude asked Danny to take a break and join him. When they were out of earshot of the two conspirators, Dude filled the young man in on the strategy to be followed then asked him how long it would take to finish what he was doing. Maher groaned and said, "We haven't even started. Do you realize that there are nearly four hundred people attached to that office?"

Dude said, "You can eliminate everyone attached to the civil division, Danny, and that should cut the list almost in half."

Maher grinned and said, "The master list I'm working from is in alphabetical order. Before Boston was out of here five minutes we ran across the name of a secretary in civil who went to Nassau with one of the investigators in criminal. This is no reflection on Boston but let's face it, Dude, I don't care if he's been running that division since Oliver Wendell Holmes was an undergraduate law clerk and everyone working there is a blood relative, he couldn't possibly be aware of everything that goes on there both during and after working hours. I know that right now one of the elements we are fighting is time, but

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if we take shortcuts, sure as God made little green apples we will overlook someone and be sorry later. But we will work as fast as we possibly can."

"This is a whole lot bigger than I thought," Dude said slowly. "Do they have any idea how many others might be involved?"

Maher took a deep breath and said, "Hang on to your hat, pal, I was afraid you were going to ask that. They estimate anywhere between twenty-five and fifty and that is only a conservative guess. That's just from his department."

"Holy Mother of God!" Dude whispered. "You don't mean that some other offices are in on it, too?"

Maher nodded and said quietly, "These two birds are so damn scared of going to jail that they are afraid to lie. They are under the impression that if they cooperate fully with us, somehow we will get them off the hook. I had a hunch that the state's attorney's office wasn't the only one involved so I brought along the master personnel lists from several departments and my hunch is proving correct."

Dude cracked one of his knuckles nervously then asked, half-afraid, "Which other offices have they mentioned so far, Dan?"

"Well, so far they have only squealed on the probation department, sheriff's office, one judge and two fairly well-known criminal defense lawyers. We better cut this short. I want to get back to my role as Father Confessor before they cool off and decide to clam up."

"Right. I'm going downstairs to meet Bea now, but I'll be back in a few minutes."

In the elevator on his way down to the lobby Dude searched his memory trying to recall if the newspaper stories had hinted at the possibility that any other departments might be implicated. He chided himself for not reading every single item in all three papers. When he stepped out of the elevator he grinned. Directly across the lobby was a cigar stand with a newspaper and magazine counter. He walked over casually and picked

up the latest edition of the three morning papers and noted to his surprise that the two afternoon papers were already out. He paid the girl for the papers and walked to stand near the front door to wait for Bea.

After several minutes a Checker cab turned into the circular driveway; he saw Bea and hurried out to meet her. The fare was five-fifty. Dude gave the driver a ten dollar bill and told him to keep the change. He then practically pushed Bea through the revolving door, across the lobby, and into the empty cocktail lounge.

He helped her into a secluded booth, got two martinis from the bartender, and carried them back to the booth.

While they relaxed over their drinks, Dude explained what had happened, and outlined the work they had in store for them. Bea listened intently while he was giving her the facts, and when he had finished, she plucked the olive from her martini and, smiling, placed it in his mouth.

He smiled and said, "I haven't let you say a word since you got out of that taxi. Did I get any phone calls this morning?"

She shook her head, and a lock of honey-blond hair fell to her forehead. She brushed it back and said, "Mike felt a little hurt that you didn't talk to him on the phone and couldn't understand why you wouldn't trust him to know where you are."

"It isn't a matter of trust at all, Princess, it's just that the fewer people who know what is going on here, the less likely it will be of someone accidentally spilling the beans."

"I guess you're right. Morrissey would give his right arm to know about this morning's meeting. He's probably combing the city right now trying to find the missing pair."

He glanced at his watch then. "Did you have lunch?"

"No," she replied. "I was just leaving for the Loop when you called. I was supposed to meet Lynn and her mother and the kids at noon. Luckily I caught them before they left the house. I told Lynn I'd see her at the wake tonight and offered to treat for a late supper if she felt up to it."

Dude, you haven't forgotten that you have a ward meeting tonight, have you?"

"No, but I'd like to," he said, frowning. "If it looks as though the job will take more than three or four hours, I'll have Mike sub for me and set the meeting over to Friday."

Bea laughed and said, "That will certainly make you the most popular guy in the fourth ward this week."

He smiled at the thought, then rose and extended his hand to help her out of the low seat. When she was standing beside him, it seemed to him that she held his hand a little longer than necessary; then dismissed the whole idea as being wishful thinking.

They walked to the bartender and Dude handed him a five, saying, "The change is yours if you can find the chef and have him send a dozen assorted sandwiches and a gallon pot of coffee up to suite 1501."

As they walked toward the bank of elevators Bea slipped her arm through his and said, "My, aren't we extravagant? If you keep up that kind of tipping in no time at all the attorney general is going to be auditing you."

"Not when they find out that Hizzoner is charging this little party to his own contingency fund," he answered solemnly.

The remark struck Bea's fancy, and she developed a case of the giggles that lasted all the way to the fifteenth floor.

Bea had met all the men in the hotel suite at one time or another. They said hello, and then Dude dumped the newspapers on the sofa and asked Bea to go over them carefully, to list any new names she found and to look for any hint that other offices besides the state's attorney's might be involved.

Danny Maher had discarded his coat, vest and tie, and was in the process of rolling up his shirt sleeves when he walked up to Dude. "We are taking a short recess so Brannigan can get his material together and put it in some

kind of order. I gave up trying to locate bills, receipts, and vouchers in that mess."

Dude grimaced and said, "I see what you mean. What have you found up to now?"

Maher took off his horn-rimmed glasses and polished them with a handkerchief before he replied. "For the past half hour or so the things that I've been finding really don't look too bad. Believe it or not, there is a considerable amount of legitimate expense there, and a lot of the hanky-panky can be glossed over just by altering some of his personal records. According to him, the law provides that he doesn't have to justify monies spent from that fund, and that he never had to give an accounting of it at budget hearings."

Dude was skeptical. "I find it hard to swallow that the county would hand him a fistful of money to use *carte blanche*. I think I'll have someone in the corporation counsel's office research the law on it and give us an opinion. What do you think?"

Before Maher could answer, the phone interrupted them. Dude answered it. "How are things going, son?" Whalen asked, sounding more like himself again.

"We are making some progress, sir, and Danny thinks things don't look so bad, after all. We still have a mountain of stuff to sift through. Have you talked to the press yet?"

"Yes," the mayor replied cheerfully. "It's a good thing I came back when I did. Two investigators from the attorney general's office were waiting for me. They had been to Brannigan's office and found his files locked up. He was smart enough to leave word that he would be out of town for the next two days, so after smoothing their ruffled feathers I convinced them to come back Friday. I told them if Brannigan hadn't returned by then, I would personally see to it that the files would be opened to them. Will that be enough time for you?"

"More than enough," Dude said. "I plan to have it wrapped up by noon tomorrow even if we have to work straight through the night."

"Fine!" Whalen said, sounding relieved. "You know, the reporters didn't give me half the hard time I had expected. All they really wanted to know was did I know anything about the charges Morrissey made. I told them that in my opinion the whole thing appeared to be politically motivated. They asked if I was going to ask for the resignations of Brannigan and the others. I told them that as far as I was concerned, the only thing I knew was that charges had been made and the state's attorney had not had time to answer them, and I was certain that all of his files would be open for anyone's inspection very soon. I told them that I would under no circumstances accept Brannigan's resignation at this time, that in this country a man is innocent until proven guilty and since no criminal action has been taken or even contemplated, I saw no reason for it."

"That's about all you could say, I suppose," Dude said absently. "Not to change the subject, but I have a suggestion that could put a stop to the whole thing one way or another. We need to have the corporation counsel's office look up the law covering the state's attorney's contingency fund and what the provisions are governing secrecy for the protection of informers and witnesses."

The mayor hesitated a moment then said, "If memory serves me correctly, he doesn't have to reveal the names of any informer or the amount given them. Otherwise it would defeat the purpose of the fund. If that is the case, then there may be a slim chance we can squeak him through before anyone can indict him. I'll get on it now, Dude, and you guys keep plugging away." He hung up.

By four-thirty Dude and Bea stopped to take a coffee break. She had found no additional revelations in the papers, and they had gone right to work trying to balance the receipts and bills against the information contained in two ledger books in which Brannigan had listed every check that had been written on the account. They were surprised that the state's attorney had actually kept a record of every penny in the fund, and of where and when the checks were distributed, whether for legitimate

purposes or not. But Brannigan refused to comment on many items except to say that the money was spent. Period. Dude got up to stretch his legs and said, "I'm going to call Whalen. He has had enough time to get together with the corporation counsel. I have a hunch that it will be the key to the whole thing."

Dude first phoned his office to see if he had any calls and to tell Mike to be at the union hall by seven and postpone the ward meeting until Friday. Mike was cool and indifferent on the phone. The only important call was from Conforti, asking that Dude call him the following day before noon. He wondered what the Sicilian wanted now, and then decided that he wasn't going to worry about it.

When he had the mayor on the phone, Dude asked what he had learned from the legal department.

"Tom Heeney is right here with me now," the mayor said, "and does he have good news! According to him, anything relating to the contingency fund is not a matter of public record and Brannigan is not required by law to keep an accounting of his expenditures. Tom thinks Brannigan should refuse to show the attorney general a damn thing and to tell him to get a court order if he wants to see his files. There is even a good chance that a judge would refuse to grant such an order because there is a possibility that by so doing the lives of the informers and witnesses, particularly some of the secret witnesses who have appeared before grand juries in the past, would be jeopardized. In short, if it comes to a showdown, all checks made out to cash can be explained away as having been used to obtain information. The others—those made out for booze and so on—we will have to go over one by one and try to justify them."

"We have been working along those lines and putting everything into three categories," Dude said. "First: all checks used for bona-fide cases and any backup material, whether we need it or not. Second: all checks and backup material used for extracurricular activities. Third: all checks made out to cash. A lot of the checks made out

to cash can easily be padded onto legitimate cases. It is one hell of a job though. We have four years' worth to go through and this guy was no piker, he spent money like it was going out of style."

"Look, Dude," the mayor cut in, "as far as I know, the attorney general seems to be interested only in what went on within the past twenty-four months. I think you should concentrate on that time period."

"We can't afford to second-guess them," Dude replied. "Let's face it, Morrissey is pushing this thing for all he's worth and if they have to go back four years to pin something on Brannigan they are going to do it. We have to be prepared, Jim."

"You're right. How far along are you now?"

"We just finished fourteen months' worth."

"You'll need more help if you expect to finish by tomorrow. Let me send two or three people over to help out."

"Jesus Christ, no, Jim!" Dude fairly shouted. "I don't want anyone else knowing what we're doing, or seeing Brannigan and Powell here. Besides, any more people would only get in the way. I promise you that we will be finished tomorrow; just let me do it my way."

"Don't be so goddamn touchy, son," Whalen said soothingly. "You're in charge of this thing. I trust your judgment; you do what you think is best."

Dude paused, then said, "One other thing, Jim. I'm going to ask Bea to stay until around seven, then we will grab a cab and drop by O'Keefe's so no one starts wondering where I am. Then I'll come back here and work with Danny until we finish."

"That sounds all right. I'll probably see you later on at the wake," Whalen said, and, as was his custom, hung up without saying good-bye.

Dude and Bea worked steadily until shortly after six.

Then Dude went into one of the bathrooms and splashed cold water on his face in an effort to stave off fatigue. After he had washed up and combed his hair, he returned to the parlor and called Maher aside. "You

haven't been out of here all day, Dan, why don't you go down to the dining room and eat? Brannigan and Powell can have their dinner sent up here."

"Thanks, Dude," he said, smiling. "But I'd just as soon all three of us ate up here. Not that I don't trust them—God knows they are scared to death of sticking their heads out that door—but I think we should relax and forget all of this for a while."

"Okay, that's up to you. I'm going to take Bea to dinner then drop over to Sully's wake. Then after I take Bea home I'll come on back. I won't be gone longer than a couple of hours. Look for me around eight or so."

"Take your time. We'll be here when you get back."

Dude took Bea to a small restaurant on North Dearborn Street where the prime ribs were reputed to be the best in town. Bea loved the intimacy of the place. There were no more than a dozen or so candle-lit tables, and in the far corner next to the tiny bar a handsome suave-looking Negro was softly playing a piano.

"It sure is good to get out of there for a while," Dude said, leaning back.

"You can say that again," she answered. "When do you think we will be finished?"

"I told Whalen we would have everything wrapped up by noon tomorrow. After we stop by O'Keefe's and I take you on home, I'm going back there and we'll work as late as we can."

"I'll come back with you," she offered.

"No dice. You go home and get some rest," Dude said.

"Well, then, I'll be back in the morning," she said reluctantly.

"Good girl. Excuse me a minute, Princess?" he asked.

Dude went to the piano player and handing the man a five dollar bill asked him to play "Street of Dreams." He returned to the table just as the waiter appeared and inquired whether they were ready to order dinner. Dude shook his head and told the man to bring another round

of drinks. Dude offered his glass for a toast as the piano player struck the first chords of the song. "To whatever may be the outcome of our efforts."

Love laughs at a King,
Kings don't mean a thing
On the Street of Dreams.

Bea touched her glass to his, then drained it in one swift motion. He hadn't thought she would be that disturbed over a song, and was about to comment on the speed with which she had disposed of the martini, when she asked, unsmiling, "Why did you have to ask him to play that?"

Dreams broken in two,
Can be made like new
On the Street of Dreams.

"I thought you liked it," he said, pretending he didn't know anything was bothering her, and turned his attention toward the pianist who now was speaking rather than singing the words of the song.

Gold, silver and gold,
All you can hold
Is in the moonbeams;

She waited until the waiter served their second round of drinks then asked, "Did you?" and finished the drink as quickly as she had the first.

"You know, those things are fairly potent—you better slow down," he advised.

Poor, no one is poor,
Long as love is sure
On the Street of Dreams.

"I think I'll have another," Bea said stubbornly.
"I think not," Dude countered mildly.

"Shall I buy my own?" she asked.

It was a pretty good bet that by the time she downed the third one she would say whatever was on her mind, he thought, so he held up two fingers to the waiter. This time when the waiter brought the drinks, Dude ordered dinner.

He was glad that she was sipping this one slowly. The unruly lock of honey-blond hair that fell to her forehead earlier that day repeated itself. This time, however, she made no attempt to brush it back. "Mike thinks you are going to get married pretty soon. Are you?"

"When did he tell you that?"

"He didn't exactly tell me," she said. "It's just that we were discussing that possibility this morning and he more or less indicated he thought you would be. Are you?"

"I told you no once before," he said sharply.

"Have you asked her to marry you yet?" She asked softly.

"Look. . . ."

"I'll bet you have."

"Beatrice!"

"What are you so touchy about? I'm getting close to the truth, aren't I?"

"That's enough, Bea. The subject is closed for the rest of the evening."

She smiled and said, "I'm sorry, Dude, it's none of my business."

The dinner was a disaster.

They made a brief appearance at the funeral home.

He was relieved to learn from Lynn's mother that arrangements had been made, with Father Devlin's help, for Sully's burial. Not, of course, at a Catholic cemetery, since suicides weren't permitted to be buried there, but at one of the large interdenominational cemeteries outside the city. It was the best way.

He was back at the Richmond-Carlton at exactly nine o'clock and all four men worked feverishly until four in the morning before calling it a night.

Chapter 8

The persistent knocking on the hotel-room door wakened Dude, who had fallen asleep on the couch. He peered at his watch and saw that it was after nine o'clock. He went to the door, and had his hand on the knob, but hesitated. He called out, "Who is it?"

"Bea. Are you going to let me in or not?"

She walked in carrying a paper bag and the morning papers. She set the newspapers on the nearest chair and handed him the bag.

"You look like hell," she said, smiling. "I brought you some shaving equipment. I thought by now all of you would begin to look pretty seedy."

He rubbed his hand over the stubble on his chin and grinned. "Thanks, Princess, how much do I owe you?"

"Nothing. I took it out of petty cash."

"Would you call room service and have them send some coffee up?" he asked. "The rest of our little family can order breakfast later if they feel like it." She perched herself on the arm of one of the chairs and said, "It's on the way."

"You think of everything, don't you? While I shower and shave how about running through the papers to see if anything new has cropped up?" She nodded and reached for the stack of papers.

When he returned to the parlor, Bea poured coffee for him. They took their cups to the coffee table and sat on the couch. "Anything new in the daily rags?" he asked.

"Just a rehash and a short item on the press conference

the mayor held yesterday," she said, and went to the pile of papers and held one up for him to see the headline.

MAYOR BACKS BRANNIGAN

Dude shrugged his shoulders and said, "That doesn't look too bad. Whalen had no choice but to stand behind him, and I think everybody knows it."

"How much more before we finish?"

"We're down to the last eight months," he said, adding, "I think we can finish by two o'clock at the latest."

By ten-thirty the group was hard at work again. At noon they had more coffee sent up and decided to skip lunch. Dude took a break and telephoned Whalen.

"Have you finished there yet, son?" The mayor's voice came booming through the phone.

"Pretty soon, sir," Dude replied. "That's why I called. Can you and Tom Heeney be over here by, say, three o'clock?"

"I'll cancel all of my scheduled appointments," Whalen answered. Then he asked in a confidential tone, "What did you find son? How bad off are we?"

Dude looked over his shoulder to make sure Brannigan and Powell could not overhear, before replying, "By the time you get here I'll have all the data outlined for you and my theory on how we should proceed. It's bad, Jim, but if we can get Brannigan to go along with what I have in mind, we may just come out all right. There are a few things that he's going to have to admit to because they are just too goddamned obvious to lie about. We will have to rehearse with him what to say and make certain he doesn't deviate from the story. The sonofabitch pocketed a bundle; so did his buddy."

"Do you think I should demand his resignation?" Whalen asked.

"Impossible," Dude said. "It's too late for that. If that happened, everything would come out and when Morris-

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sey took over he wouldn't stop until everyone connected with it was thrown in jail."

The mayor sighed resignedly. "I'll notify the press that Brannigan will have a formal statement to make at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning at his office. Then all we can do is sit back and pray."

"Try not to worry too much, Jim, I think that with a little luck we can pull it off. See you at three," Dude said, and hung up.

At two o'clock they were finished. All the state's attorney's records, except the two ledger books, were returned to the three briefcases, and Dude arranged the chairs around the table so that he would be seated at the head, the mayor to his right, Heeney next to him, Maher on his left side and Bea next to him. Brannigan and Powell would occupy the last two chairs at the far end of the table. The two ledgers and three legal pads were neatly stacked in front of the seat Dude would occupy. He decided to brief Brannigan and Powell before the mayor arrived. When everyone was seated Dude looked at the dejected state's attorney and his aide and said, "From here on in both of you are going to do exactly as I say. If you don't, I guarantee you will both be indicted and sent to jail."

He paused, waiting to see if they were going to voice any objections. They didn't. "Later I will go into detail about what you are going to say but for now I just want to inform you that you are going to have to admit to quite a bit. In doing so you will be put in a pretty bad light but that can't be avoided. The items you will admit to are borderline things that are just short of grounds for criminal prosecution. The outright stealing, where just you two lined your pockets, will be covered up. Pressure is going to be put on you like you never imagined possible by the attorney general's office, so you will say no more and no less than what I tell you. The only way they will be able to hang you is if either of you cracks. If you change your story by even one word they will have a toe-

hold and from there on they will keep on you until they wear you down."

Brannigan was badly frightened. He looked pleadingly at Dude and asked, "Is this the only way? I mean can't we just tell them that the law says I don't have to account for expenditures from that fund? Why should I have to explain every check to them?"

Dude shook his head. "If that account were clean you could tell them all to go to hell, but it's not. You must voluntarily give them an accounting of every penny. That way the public sees that you have nothing to hide. What you do admit to will seem like poor judgment, at most."

The state's attorney was far from convinced. "What if they don't believe me?"

"They will," Dude said flatly. "Just say what I tell you to say. The way I have it set up they can think anything they like, but they won't be able to prove it."

"I'm not sure I can do it," Brannigan said fearfully.

"You'll do it, friend, and you'll do it right," Dude said in a low, deadly voice. "As close as I can figure it, between the two of you you helped yourselves to over ninety thousand dollars. How would you like to explain that to a grand jury?"

That was too much for the state's attorney. He got up quickly and ran to the bathroom: they heard him being sick.

The mayor arrived at three o'clock exactly and Dude wasted no time beginning the meeting. He rose and began: "Gentlemen, this is it. We will sink or swim on what is agreed on this afternoon. The mayor will decide the course of action, after I finish outlining the situation and the alternatives. First, I would like to point out that there has been no threat of an investigation into the personal finances of Mr. Brannigan or Mr. Powell by the attorney general's people or by Morrissey. That is about the only thing in our favor. At least we won't have to explain their additional income.

"This is the situation as it now stands. Since Mr. Brannigan took office a little less than four years ago, the

county has authorized sixty-five thousand dollars each year in the state's attorney's budget to be used as a contingency fund. The corporation counsel, Mr. Heeney, informs me that this is the only portion of the budget for which the state's attorney need not make an accounting to the county board at the budget hearings. The major reason for that is that the money is then supposed to be given to informers, witnesses, and so on. The only reason for the non-accountability is for the protection of these persons.

"There are other legitimate expenses that occur in connection with the fund. Some checks must be made to business establishments like hotels and restaurants, whenever witnesses are kept secluded for their own protection before and during grand-jury hearings and trials. Should the allotted funds not be exhausted by the end of the fiscal year, the state's attorney may either return the balance to the county treasurer, or, if he so desires, carry the funds over and add them to the new allotment for the following year without that amount being deducted from the new budget request.

"In the four years of Mr. Brannigan's administration a total of \$260,000 has been put on deposit in the contingency-fund account. During this period 349 checks were drawn on that account: \$240,000 were spent. Here is the breakdown per year: First year, \$59,000. Second year, \$51,000. Third year, \$68,000. This year, \$56,000.

"Thanks to Mr. Brannigan's two ledger books we were able to trace the entire \$234,000. The first year \$37,000 was used properly; \$22,000 for illegal purposes. The second year \$26,000 legitimate, \$25,000 misspent. The third year \$45,000 okay; \$23,000 not okay. And this year \$36,000 legit, \$20,000 not so legit. What we wind up with is \$144,000 legitimate expenses and \$90,000 pilfered.

"I believe it is safe to assume that at least \$30,000 more was misused but safely 'covered in that \$144,000 figure. Mr. Brannigan and Mr. Powell diverted at least \$120,000 over the past four years and probably more. However, at this point only \$90,000 has to be covered, and out of that \$65,000 were all cash items in amounts

from \$100 to one whopper mentioned in the newspapers for \$8,000. Twenty-five thousand of the \$90,000 was spent on the following items: Christmas parties; \$8,000 for food and liquor. Trips to Florida; \$17,000. Mr. Brannigan and Mr. Powell are going to have to admit to these items. How they whitewash the Miami trips we'll have to leave to their ingenuity. I can only suggest that they check to see if there were any conventions going on when they were vacationing. Or, if they want to stretch a point, say they went to interview a witness who skipped the state.

"For the \$65,000 still open, I think we have an alibi. From time to time Mr. Brannigan gave bonuses from the fund to deserving employees who had worked long hours in overtime for which the county did not provide compensation. This will be the admission they will make.

"I have discounted the involvement of others because no one can positively prove the other trips and so forth were not bona fide.

"I will pass this notepad around for your inspection. It lists every one of the three hundred forty-nine checks, and how the money was spent, that is, according to me. You will find some with just a question mark beside them. Those will be the items Mr. Brannigan and Mr. Powell will provide excuses for. Save any questions until you have studied the notes."

While they studied the lists, Dude went to get coffee from the room-service cart. Bea joined him. He smiled and asked, "How did I do, Princess?"

She looked up at him and whispered, "If you pull this one off there is no question that the mayor will back you to succeed him in next year's mayoralty race."

"That's exactly what I'm counting on, Princess," he said gravely. "This whole thing could be a blessing in disguise."

When Dude returned to the conference table, the mayor was still scanning the notes. Dude waited until he was finished and had handed the pad back before saying, "Let's

get on with the questions, and I know there are bound to be a few."

Tom Heeney, the city's corporation counsel, was the first of the group to raise a hand.

"Go ahead, Tom," Dude said.

"I think that possibly giving bonuses could be construed by the attorney general as offering a gratuity and accepting a gratuity both of which are illegal and are grounds for prosecution," the city's lawyer said.

"I don't think so, Tom," Dude said thoughtfully. "A gratuity would have to come from an outside source, such as an attorney, and be offered for some service an employee performed that was in the scope of his or her particular job. This is different. Everyone is aware that since the collapse of the market in 1929 the county discontinued paying overtime, yet still expected employees to put in overtime hours. I think if anyone was curious enough, they could find that several departments juggle their budgets to give extra compensation to their employees." He paused, smiling, and said, "I do it myself." Everyone laughed at the committeeman's confession and the tension was eased somewhat.

Mayor Whalen held a finger up and said, "Isn't there some way you could put some of the so-called bonus money under the heading of paying informers? That's quite a chunk of money and it stands out like a sore thumb."

Dude shook his head. "I've tried, but there were too many checks drawn over short periods of time in addition to the ones drawn for legal purposes. Also, I think everybody believes that statement made by one of Brannigan's employee's that the average amount paid to an informer is about twenty-five dollars. We will have to stand on that explanation, sir."

The mayor directed his next question to the state's attorney rather than to Dude. "Okay, playboy, what about your junkets to the land of sunshine? How are you going to alibi your way out of them?"

Brannigan looked at Whalen sullenly and said, "All my

trips coincided with conventions pertaining to some field of law enforcement being held in Miami. I always attended them and gave at least one speech. I can check my calendars and fill in the name of the organization sponsoring the convention. Whether you believe it or not, one trip we made, the one mentioned in the papers that named some other people from my office, was made to find a reluctant witness in a major criminal case. We finally found him in Nassau and brought him back to Miami. We were staying at Danker's Inn and we put him up there too for several days, but couldn't convince him to testify. He was sure he would be killed if he gave testimony at the trial."

"Perfect!" Dude said. "Where did you stay on all of your trips to Miami?"

"Danker's Inn," he replied.

Dude glanced at Whalen, then said, "I trust you had the good sense to stay away from their casino. All we need now is for someone to pop up and say they saw you gambling down there." He made a mental note to call Fred Danker in Miami and ask him if he remembered seeing Brannigan at the gambling tables.

The state's attorney became indignant. "Gambling is not one of my vices."

Danny Maher looked directly at Brannigan and laughed. Then he turned to Dude and said, "That leaves the Christmas parties."

The committeeman thought for a moment, then said, "Well, half the offices in the city and the county give Christmas parties and charge them off one way or another. Brannigan will say that he couldn't give all of his people bonuses, so he had the parties to show his appreciation. The public isn't going to see a thing wrong in that, and let's not forget that it's the voter's who count, rather than Morrissey and the attorney general. It will be up to our charming Mr. Brannigan to appear confident that the things he did were in the long run for the best interests of the taxpayers. A few dollars here and there and a few parties are paltry return for the valuable extra services rendered

to the county by the dedicated people working in the state's attorney's office."

"Jesus Christ, son!" the mayor said when he finished. "The way you put it makes it sound as though our baboon of a state's attorney was some sort of saint doing good for all."

Dude grinned. "That is exactly the picture we are going to present. Now gentlemen, if there are no more questions I will sum everything up. There are three courses of action open to us. Number one: call for Mr. Brannigan's resignation, publicly branding him a thief, and hand the office over to Morrissey. Second: let Brannigan handle this thing himself. He could refuse to divulge any information and gamble on the attorney general not being able to obtain a court order to look at his files. Or third: proceed with the explanations I have outlined. If that course of action is followed we have a big plus factor on our side from the beginning. The attorney general's people have taken all the cancelled checks and the checkbooks. So when Brannigan presents his information to them, describing every check, the date and the amount and an explanation without having to refer to the check stubs or checks, it will appear that he kept detailed records even though by law he wasn't required to. His secretary can type this up in a couple of hours, with copies for the investigators. Between now and his press conference in the morning Brannigan can memorize the notes. That way he'll put them on the defensive right from the start. That's it. What is your opinion, Mr. Mayor?"

Whalen looked at Dude and winked. "I will reserve my opinion for the moment and listen to what Mr. Brannigan has to say. I believe I will leave the choice up to him. Well, Bill, what is it going to be?"

There was pure hatred in Brannigan's eyes as he stared at the mayor. "All of you have boxed me in. I don't have a goddamned choice but to do what Brennan wants."

"You thieving bastard!" Whalen roared. "You ought to get down on your hands and knees and kiss Mr. Brennan's feet for providing you with a way to get you out of this

stinking mess without being thrown in jail! I ought to let you go down the drain you ungrateful lout."

Dude looked at the state's attorney and said quietly, "You don't have to do it my way if you don't want, Bill."

"I'll do it, Brennan, and I'll put on a good performance. I just hope they believe me," Brannigan said savagely.

Dude smiled and said, "I'm confident we can come out of this smelling like a rose. Take this with you and get it typed up." He handed Brannigan the notepad.

As everyone prepared to leave, the mayor turned to Dude and said, "I want you and Bea to ride with me."

During the ride back to the Loop in the mayor's limousine, Dude felt relaxed for the first time since the ordeal began.

"Will it work, Dude?" Whalen asked, sounding less confident than he had earlier.

"It will if Brannigan doesn't lose his nerve."

"And if he does?" the mayor wanted to know.

"I doubt that he will," Dude replied. "He knows that if he doesn't pull it off he and Powell will probably be indicted."

They rode for a while in silence before the mayor said, "If through some miracle we get him reelected, I'm going to make him resign a couple of months later for reasons of health, and appoint someone with a few more brains to serve out the unexpired term."

Dude laughed and said, "I knew you were going to say that."

Whalen smiled and then said, "I suppose that you have already gathered by now who I'm going to have run for my office next year?"

"I'm the only logical choice and you know it." Dude laughed.

"I'll tell you one thing, son, you better rid yourself of some of your cockiness before next spring or I might change my mind," the city leader warned.

"Come on, Jim," Dude said seriously. "You know I only do it to get your goat."

"Well, I don't like it!"

"Okay. From now on, no more sass."

"We'll see."

When they neared City Hall, Dude invited the mayor to join him and Bea for a drink, but he had some things that he had to get done before five and it was almost that already. So Dude and Bea, at City Hall, crossed the street to the Randolph Corners bar.

The five o'clock rush had not yet begun, so they had their choice of booths. They picked a booth that provided a fair degree of privacy and Dude signaled a waitress over, ordered drinks, and asked for a phone. Before the waitress departed Dude turned to Bea. "I don't know about you, but I'm starving. How about a steak sandwich?"

She nodded, and he ordered, asking the waitress to time it so they would be able to relax over one or two drinks first. As soon as the phone was plugged in, he called his office. His friend still sounded casual and indifferent. Mike said that other than the usual number of favor seekers and complainers calling, the only important calls were from Conforti, Lynn Sullivan, and Jackie.

After they had eaten, Bea said, "If you won't need me any more today, Dude, I'd like to go on home. It's been a long day."

"Sure, Princess," he said and reached into his wallet, took out a five dollar bill, and handed it to her. "Take a cab, sweetheart."

"Thanks. I'll see you in the morning," she said and left.

Then he called the convalescent home. Dr. Kessell was out of town for the day; when he asked to be connected to Jackie he was told that she had just received her medication and was not to be disturbed for the rest of the night. He left a message for Jackie, saying he would be out to see her before noon the next day. Conforti was out when Dude called: he debated about leaving his name, then decided against it.

Two out of three, he thought. He gave the operator Lynn's number. "Hello?" He recognized Irene Wells's voice.

"Hi, Irene, this is Dude. How are you?"

"Pretty good, considering. And you?"

"I got a message Lynn called."

"Wait a minute and I'll get her."

When Lynn came to the phone, she asked, "Did you get my message?"

"Yeah. What's up, honey?" he asked.

"I have to talk to you. Alone. Something happened and I'm frightened," she said, sounding scared.

"I take it you don't want to talk now?" he asked her.

"Right," she answered quietly. "Can you meet me at nine-thirty at the bar in the Alton? I can't leave the funeral home before nine."

He didn't particularly care for the idea of a rendezvous with a newly-made widow while her husband was still laid out and not yet buried. But it could be important, so he said, "Okay, honey, I'll be waiting for you." And then he hung up.

On his way out he handed the bartender some money, and said, "I made a thirty-cent toll call, Eddie. Thanks for the use of the phone."

Sipping his third martini at the Alton, Dude knew it was foolhardy to be seen in public with Lynn. He knew it, but he wanted to see her again. Had it not been for the complacent feeling the drinks had created he might have left before she got there. Whatever was troubling her could most likely be postponed for a day or two. He knew it and he knew she probably knew it too. She wanted him and he wanted her. That alone was the reason she wanted to see him. Knowing this, sure of it, he had arranged for a room at the hotel before he went to the lounge to wait for her.

He saw her standing in the doorway, magnificently silhouetted in the light from the lobby. She wore a black suit, and the tiny black hat on her head held a sheer black net veil that barely covered her blue eyes.

He was standing before she reached him. He took both her hands, and looked into her eyes. After a moment, he said, "You're late, but seeing you, it was worth the wait."

She smiled and reached up and kissed him on the cheek.

When they were seated she removed the delicate hat and veil and shook her head, letting her pale hair fall back into its soft waves. Dude looked into her eyes again for a long moment and then said, "Tell me what is troubling you and I guarantee that whatever it is I will take care of it for you."

She smiled at him, pressed his hand for a moment, then took a folded piece of paper from her purse and handed it to him. It was a letter, addressed to Mrs. John J. Sullivan, and came from the state university.

Dear Mrs. Sullivan:

The board of trustees of this institution has received from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous a sum of money to be placed in a fund to be used for the payment of a full college education for your four children.

According to the information supplied us by the donor, your children are fourteen, twelve, and twins aged six.

Should this information prove to be incorrect, please notify this office at your earliest convenience.

Very truly yours,
L. Wainwright Meath
Dean of Admissions

The letter came as no great surprise to Dude. He folded it and handed it back to Lynn. She crumpled the piece of paper into a ball and threw it on the floor, then said, "It's from that gangster Conforti, isn't it?"

"Of course it is," he said flatly.

"I can't accept it."

"Don't be foolish, honey, it doesn't obligate you to anything. Take it. If you don't you might be denying your kids an education."

She shook her head. "How can I ever explain to them that a hoodlum was buying their schooling in payment for driving their father to suicide?"

"You don't know for sure that Conforti was responsi-

ble," he said, "and the university would never reveal the name of the donor. How do you know that the mayor wasn't responsible for this?"

"Because I also received an envelope by special messenger this morning, containing ten thousand dollars in cash. No note. Nothing. I suppose the mayor sent that over, too?"

"Just take it, Lynn," he said sharply. "You can use it. Don't ask where it comes from. You can't return it anyway."

She looked at him helplessly and asked softly, "Are you sure it will be all right if I accept it?"

Dude smiled and put his arm around her. "I'm sure," he said convincingly.

After two drinks Lynn snuggled up to him and whispered in his ear, "I told mother to take the kids to her house for the night. Let's go somewhere."

If I'm a bastard, he thought, Jesus Christ she's not one bit better. He placed a hand gently on her soft, full breast and said huskily, "We have a room upstairs. Let's go."

She turned and, kissing him hard on the lips, murmured, "I'm always ready for you, darling."

Neither of them saw the saloon columnist, Kolb, sitting at the bar, watching them intently.

Chapter 9

Dude was in his office and at his desk the next day before Bea and Mike showed up. Sometime during the night Lynn had quietly left. He found a brief note saying that she thought it best to be home before daylight.

Now that it was morning and his head was clear he knew instinctively that meeting Lynn had been a serious mistake. Dammit he thought, the next time I am around her I'm going to drink ginger ale. Those martinis get me into trouble every time. He had a nagging premonition that someone might have seen them together, and he knew he had to cover himself. Although it was before nine, he called the mayor's private number.

"Yeah?" said the familiar voice.

"Dude. You are in early today, Jim."

"Couldn't sleep worrying about this Brannigan business."

"It's going to work out all right, Jim," he said very confidently. "Lynn called me late yesterday afternoon and asked to meet me after the wake last night. She was badly frightened because she had received an envelope with ten grand in it by special messenger. No note. Then by mail she received a letter from the university telling her that a trust fund had been established to pay for a full college education for her children and that the contributor was to remain anonymous. She concluded, as I did, that Conforti was behind it. Well, she didn't want to keep it, but I convinced her that it would be impossible to return the cash, and if she started making waves at the university someone might get suspicious and start checking into it

and possibly link the whole thing together. I'm not sure I did the right thing, Jim, but I told her to keep it and say nothing. I didn't know what else to tell her. Conforti must be scared that she may want some sort of revenge and spill the beans about Sully's connection with him."

The mayor was silent for a while before answering. "I think you used good judgment, Dude. What worries me though is that letter. No one should see it. Better call her now and tell her to destroy it; something like that in the hands of the wrong person is potential dynamite."

"I'll get on it now, Jim, talk to you later," he said and broke the connection. He called Lynn immediately.

"Hello."

"Hi. Can you talk, honey?"

"Yes. I'm just waiting for the car from O'Keefe's to pick me up. What's wrong, Dude?"

"Nothing really," he said, trying to sound as casual as possible. "I spoke with Whalen just now and told him about the unsolicited items you received yesterday. He agreed with me completely that the best thing is to keep it and say nothing. He's a bit concerned about that letter and thinks you should destroy it to be on the safe side."

"Oh, my God!" she cried out. "But I crumpled it up and dropped it on the floor in the bar last night."

Dude had a sick feeling in the pit of his stomach. He couldn't rid himself of the idea that someone had seen them last night. He tried to sound unconcerned. "Don't worry, it doesn't really matter. I'll send Mike over to the Alton this morning and have him poke around and see if he can find it. I'll call you this afternoon, honey."

"Aren't you coming to the funeral?"

"I don't think that it would be a very good idea. If Roberta Ashton sees me she is liable to make a scene."

"I hadn't thought of that, but you're right." Lynn sighed. "You know she caused a hell of a scene last night at O'Keefe's because I had the casket closed and wouldn't allow her to see Jack's body. I have to go now, Dude, the car just pulled in the drive."

Mike had come in while Dude was talking to Lynn, and was sitting at Bea's desk.

"Where is Bea?" he asked his chauffeur.

"She said she wouldn't be in today. She's got the flu or something. She was coughing and sneezing a blue streak."

Dude nodded and then told Mike about his meeting with Lynn, about the letter and the money, and told him to get over to the Alton and see if he could locate the letter, and if necessary to look in the trash.

While Mike was gone he concentrated on the things that he was going to stress at the ward meeting that night. He had to impress on the minds of his precinct captains that Morrissey was out for blood—his blood. The ward would be watched closely during the campaign: there was a rumor that Morrissey was going to have at least two poll watchers in every precinct on election day looking for any sign of vote buying or vote fraud. Dude knew that he would have to stop a few of the practices used in past elections. He couldn't risk being caught in an election-rigging scandal now that he knew definitely Whalen was going to make him the Democratic nominee for mayor in the spring.

The phone rang. It was Conforti. "You are a difficult man to track down, Mr. Brennan."

"I've been extremely busy with a matter that has kept me away from the office for the past two days," Dude said mildly.

The Sicilian chuckled in that sinister way of his that irritated Dude. "I presume that you were trying to cover up Mr. Brannigan's indiscretions. He is certainly not the most astute politician to hold public office in this city."

"Look, Tony," Dude said, ignoring the reference to Brannigan, "I'm going to be out your way early this afternoon. Suppose I meet you at the usual place around one or one-thirty?"

"Excellent, sir," Conforti said. "That will save me the trouble of having to send Cowboy and Sonny out to escort you here personally."

Dude said angrily, "Don't you ever send those two gorillas of yours into this ward again looking for me! From now until the election the less we're seen together the better. This will be the last meeting we'll have for several weeks." Dude slammed down the receiver and cursed because his hands were shaking.

When he calmed down he phoned Frank Quinncannon and asked him to get a rundown on Conforti's two playmates for him. The detective said that he would call back within the hour. Dude was glad that Frank didn't ask why he wanted the information.

An hour later Mike returned to the office.

"Did you find the letter?" Dude asked impatiently.

"No! And don't ask me if I'm sure, either!" Mike said hotly. "When the joint was cleaned up this morning all the trash was dumped into three barrels. I looked at every scrap of paper in all three of the cans, but no letter. If it had been there I would have found it."

"How about the garbage men? They could have made their pickup before you got there."

"Nope. They never get there before noon."

Dude was certain now that someone in that bar had seen them and had retrieved the letter Lynn threw away. All he could do was wait, but he was sure that sooner or later the damn thing would pop up again.

"Mike? Let me have the keys to the car; I'm going out to see Jackie this morning. Catch the phones while I'm gone."

The huge man tossed the keys to Dude's desk and asked, "How long you going to be gone?"

The phone rang, and as he reached for it he said to Mike, "I'll be back by two."

Frank Quinncannon said: "I have the dope on those two. Do you want to get a pencil?"

"No," Dude said. "Just read it off to me, Frank."

"Here goes. Bartolomo Infantolini also known as 'Cow-boy.' Age twenty-nine. Born in Brooklyn, New York. Rumored to be a member of the Vito Fischetti 'family.' Nineteen arrests as a juvenile, charged with everything from extortion to suspicion of murder. Spent almost two

years in the state correctional school for boys after being convicted of carrying a concealed weapon and attempted robbery of a candy store. As an adult he was arrested twelve times. Four of the twelve were for assault with the intent to commit murder and the other eight were for suspicion of murder. No convictions. He moved to Chicago five years ago when a New York grand jury began inquiring about several missing citizens whose bodies were found buried in Brooklyn, and I don't mean in the local cemetery. Eventually the investigation was dropped but Infantolini stayed on here to become a torpedo for Conforti."

"Boys will be boys."

"Yeah, he's a real sweetheart. Know how he got the name of Cowboy? Seems he was collecting 'Juice' for one of the local telephone-booth finance companies when one of his clients couldn't come up with the vigorish. Our boy jumps on the poor guy's back and starts stabbing him in the chest while all of the onlookers were yelling 'ride 'em, cowboy!' Just a friendly neighborhood bill collector. Well, to continue. His partner is Giacomo 'Sonny' DePalma. Age thirty. Also born in Brooklyn. May or may not be a member of the Fischetti family. Twenty-six arrests as a juvenile. Most were for pennyante stuff; however, he took a fall during that time. He was charged with assault with the intent to commit murder but the charge was reduced to simple assault. He entered a plea of guilty probably thinking he would only receive a slap on the wrist but the judge shipped him up to the state school where he met and became good friends with Infantolini.

"Here is an interesting coincidence. DePalma had eight arrests as an adult and all for suspicion of murder. Each time he was picked up it was either on the same day or within a day or so of the time Infantolini was grabbed. No convictions. Both of them started working for Conforti about the same time. It's a bit odd to note that neither one of them has ever been arrested in Illinois."

"Thanks, Frank," Dude said. And as he was about to hang up Quinn Cannon said, "Wait a minute, partner. I also looked up Conforti's sheet as long as you are checking his employees' references."

"Tell me more, Sherlock," Dude said, smiling.

"Antonio Rocco Luchese Conforti, also known as Big Tony and Big Fish. Don't ask me why on that one, beats the hell out of me. To continue. Age forty-six. Born in Calcano, Sicily, and emigrated to New York with his father and mother when he was four years old. Vito and Anselmo Fischetti are his first cousins, which probably explains why Infantolini and DePalma decided to take up residence in our fair city after they decided they did not wish to speak to the local authorities about the Brooklyn parties. No juvenile record. By age nineteen he controlled a large section of Manhattan. He became known as a mediator for disputes among the various families and was on his way to becoming one of the top men in New York when for some unknown reason he suddenly left and came here to become a minor figure in the Mario Battaglia gang.

"In less than three years he worked himself up until he was number-two man in the organization. He was with Battaglia the night he was gunned down in a Rush Street restaurant, and Conforti narrowly missed getting it himself. Now in control he set out methodically to form an empire of his own. The rest I guess you are familiar with. The gang wars, his intervention in the fighting, and then his absolute control over crime in the entire county. Less than twenty years. Not bad for an ambitious lad trying to make his way in the world."

"That's the American way," Dude said. "A regular Horatio Alger."

"He has only been arrested once as an adult and that was here when he was with the old Battaglia gang. He was brought in on a murder-suspicion charge that was later dropped. He never did go to court."

"Thanks again, Frank," Dude said. "I hope I didn't put you to too much trouble."

"No trouble at all, partner," Frank said. "But just a friendly word of advice. You are rubbing shoulders with some pretty mean customers and I wouldn't want to visit you in the morgue, so watch yourself."

"Thanks for the advice. I'll try to follow it."

Jackie was sitting on the patio in a lawn chair when he drove up. She waved to him as he walked up the gravel path. She looked radiant in the sunshine. Her long black hair was held back by a pink ribbon that matched the color of her robe. He looked at her as she smiled up at him, and felt very guilty about playing house with Lynn and he promised himself that it would never happen again.

"Hi, kitten," he said and leaned over and kissed her.

"Hi yourself, Irish."

He pulled up a chair beside her and they talked for nearly two hours. He told her all about the Brannigan mess, Sully's suicide, his assurance by Whalen that he would become the next mayor, and finally and very casually about meeting Lynn last night, just in case anything came of that.

She told him all the hospital gossip, and how good the nurses and doctors had been to her. She related the conversations she had had with Kimmie and Maude, and told him how impressed Kimmie had been with the Oriental Gardens and Mr. Ishimata.

Most of all, she told him over and over again how much she loved him and wanted to be with him. Before he left they both went to her room and called Kimmie and Maude.

When it was time to leave he assured her that he would be back on Sunday with Maude and the little girl. When he left, she cried.

The whole atmosphere of the Forest Park restaurant seemed to have altered. Dude felt as though he were entering a hostile world. The things he had learned from Frank Quinncannon about Conforti and his lieutenants drastically changed his outlook on them. It was one thing to know of them as underworld figures, but quite another to know their whole violent past.

He had never actually been afraid that they would harm him physically, mostly because he was a public figure and companion to the nation's number-one politician, but now he began having doubts: if he ever did anything to alienate

them he might one day disappear and never be heard from again. Worse, it could happen to Jackie or Mike or Bea or Lynn.

Conforti was sitting in his usual booth and his two gunmen were at their usual table a few feet away, reading copies of the racing form, and Dude wondered idly if they ever switched positions just to break the monotony.

The Sicilian waved him over, and said in a very friendly way, "I am pleased to see you again, Mr. Brennan. Sit down and join me in a cup of coffee."

Dude slipped into the booth and said, "Skip the coffee. What is it you want now, Tony?"

Conforti laughed and said, "Always to the point aren't you, Mr. Brennan? Very well. There is a young man by the name of John Vitale, a resident of Oak Park who was recently admitted to the bar. He graduated number one in his law class, and his family is very prominent socially. I understand that there is an opening in the state's attorney's office for a prosecutor in the criminal division. I would like you to meet him and use your influence to see that he is appointed to fill that vacancy."

Dude looked at him disgustedly and said, "You sure picked a hell of a time to want something out of Brannigan's office. The last thing he needs now is to hire someone connected with you and have the papers get hold of it. Not to mention the fact that I would have to be dragged into it because I sponsored him. The answer is no. I'm going to be the nominee for mayor next year and I'll be goddamned if I'll screw that up by getting involved with your relatives."

Conforti laughed heartily. "Mr. Brennan, you certainly fail to ever give me any credit for being discreet. To begin with, Mr. Vitale is in no way related to me. Second, I would never dream of sending him directly to you. Mr. Oswald, the mayor of Oak Park who enjoys a reputation of complete honesty and trust, has graciously consented to draft a letter of introduction to you for the young man. So it's simply the granting of a favor to one politician from another. Since you have all of the facts now I trust you will consent to help this fine young man."

Dude cocked his head to one side, and smiled as he said, "Honest to God, you've got more bullshit than a ranch in Texas. You win. When your boy has the letter have him contact my secretary for an appointment."

"You are a gentleman, a real gentleman. I shall not forget this favor, sir," the Sicilian said, beaming at the committeeman.

Dude was out of the booth and about to leave when he remembered and said, "Sending Lynn Sullivan ten grand was all right, but why the hell did you have to set up that trust fund for her kids? She was upset about it. She showed me the letter from the college and then threw it away in the bar at the Alton. Someone apparently picked it up and whoever it was could right now be trying to find out who the mysterious benefactor is."

"Mr. Brennan," Conforti said in a tone one would use in addressing a child who had failed to learn his lessons, "it has been my experience that women are unreliable creatures, prone to hysterical acts. It has also been my experience that these same women, when provided with substantial financial security, suddenly become the masters of their emotions, thus causing them to think quite rationally before they decide to act in any manner that would jeopardize that security. In short, Mr. Brennan, the gesture will reap benefits for all concerned. As to your fears about a letter from the institution of higher learning, I must confess I find it amusing. The endowment, as I prefer to call it, was administered through two banks, and not one official at either bank is aware of a single name connected with the transaction because, my dear Mr. Brennan, when cash is involved there is no need for names or signatures."

Dude left the restaurant feeling, as he did quite often after seeing him, that the mob chieftain had once more gotten the better of him.

That night the union hall was hot and sticky, due to the fact that it was poorly ventilated, ill-equipped to handle the nearly two hundred men milling about.

Although Mike was in his shirtsleeves, he was soaked

with perspiration and was grumbling as he collected the notices that had been sent to all of the precinct captains and their aides. Each notice had to be signed by the person receiving it and turned in at every meeting so that the committeeman could be sure that all of his soldiers were in attendance.

When Mike had completed this chore he signaled to Dude.

Dude adjusted the microphone, then said, "Let's all settle down. The sooner everyone gets quiet, the sooner we will all get out of here." He waited until the hubbub subsided, then continued. "This is the first meeting of the campaign and will probably be the most important one we have because tonight I am going to be giving you instructions and guidelines that must be strictly adhered to if we intend to win in November.

"Many of the things we have gotten away with in the past because no one was around to see what we were doing will be forbidden in this election. You all know what I am referring to. Graveyard voting, ghost registrations, voting in a dozen different precincts under a dozen different names, precinct captains and workers going to each other's precincts and voting people who were confined to their beds or sick in hospitals. We may even be forced to eliminate ballot switching in the transient precincts."

There was loud groaning from the ward heelers in charge of the skid-row transient precincts. Dude rapped on the table for order, then proceeded. "Don't start bellyaching yet, I haven't fully made my mind up on that one, but you will know in plenty of time before election day. By now there is no one in this room who has not read about the malicious slandering of that most dedicated and humble of public servants our esteemed state's attorney, Mr. William Brannigan."

The laughter and guffaws were deafening and it took Dude a full minute to restore order in the hall. He decided to add a bit more levity to try and make their discomfort in the heat a little more bearable. In a surprise-filled voice, he asked, "I believe I detect that one or two of you gentlemen may be inclined to lend some

credence to the horrendous charges leveled by the honorable Mr. James Morrissey?"

This time the laughter was accompanied by a resounding round of 'applause and again it took Dude several moments before he could be heard again. "Now, I am going to go on to something serious. Something that will affect the lives and futures of each and every one of you here tonight: the reason why we are going to keep this campaign as straight as possible. Yesterday Mayor Whalen informed me that the Democratic nominee for the office of mayor of the city of Chicago is going to be Patrick Michael Brennan."

Complete pandemonium broke out in the hall. Everyone was on their feet clapping, whistling, shouting, dancing in circles with one another, surrounding the tiny platform, pushing and shoving to shake hands with the next mayor. One of the well-wishers was the senior Brennan, who seemed to Dude to be as enthusiastic as the others.

Dude whistled shrilly into the microphone several times in an effort to attract their attention, and big Mike was in front of the podium trying to get the elated precinct captains back into their seats again. At one point Dude almost gave up and walked out, but reconsidered. Fifteen minutes later enough order had been restored so that he could control his congregation. He said, "Thank you very much for your confidence. But please hold back your enthusiasm for now or we'll be here all night. And by the way, what I just told you is absolutely not for publication: Mayor Whalen can't make an official announcement while I am a candidate for alderman of this ward.

"Gentlemen, the events of the past few days have pointed up to us that Morrissey means business. I am to be his next target. He will be trying every trick in the book to put me in the same position he put Brannigan. I don't believe he can do it, but that will not stop him from trying.

"On Monday morning the books will be open for registration for the next two weeks. According to the latest poll sheets we have our work cut out for us. The number of registered voters compared to the number of persons living in the ward is way out of balance. I want every

precinct captain, except the ones who handle the transient precincts, to furnish me with a list of the names and addresses and length of residence in the ward of every person who has not registered. I will expect that list to be in the ward office before we meet again next Friday.

"The captains of the transient precincts will register every stewbum at one of the local flophouses. And for Christ's sake this time have the hotel registration cards back-dated no less than six months, and not all on the same day. In the last election there were over two hundred winos who just happened to take up residence on the same day."

There was snickering from those who were not guilty of this serious infraction of the rules of Chicago's political practices. Dude rapped again for order. "Don't laugh. I am deadly serious. It is this kind of dumb mistake that can put us out of business. Be sure you stagger those dates. Take a calendar with you if you have to. And another thing, bring your voters to the firehouse *sober*. Last registration some of those bums were so plastered they couldn't even write their own names. If I hear of one giving out a half dollar before he gets his wino registered, that captain or worker is going to be looking for another job.

"There will be a money envelope for every precinct captain for expenses at the ward headquarters. They can be picked up anytime after noon on Monday. And I don't want everybody showing up at one time. Some of you can pick up your envelopes on Tuesday. Another thing: I don't want to hear any griping about the amount. The amounts will vary greatly depending on the location of the precinct. Any captain needing more cash will get it only after he has given me a satisfactory accounting of how the first allotment was spent.

"In about fifteen days our campaign literature and posters will be out. Each precinct captain will pick up enough material for him and his workers to get started. If and when you run out, just stop by the office and we will always have more on hand. By the time the final week of the campaign rolls around I don't want to see a single

plate-glass window or a telephone pole in this ward without a picture of either me or Brannigan on it."

Again there were groans and catcalls: Dude rapped on the table. "You all know that after what has happened we must push Brannigan in. I know how hard it's going to be, but I know you men can do it. We'll beat this guy Morrissey at his own game. For now, I want you to concentrate on registration. Let's go out this weekend and line up our people. Come Monday, get them over to the firehouse on Taylor Street and *get them registered*. I want to see that firehouse full every day for the next two weeks.

"That's enough for tonight, except to say thank you, gentlemen. I know you'll all be out there doing the fine job you've done in the past. I'll see you all here next Friday at seven o'clock."

The campaign had begun.

William Estes Brannigan had always been a complex man. He was born and raised in a small coal town in southern Illinois, and forced by his father to take up law. His father insisted that his only son not become trapped in the slavery of the coal mines as he and his father had been.

Young Brannigan detested the lectures on obscure court cases and the legal opinions written about them. The long hours spent in research among the musty lawbooks in the university library bored him. He yearned to be a writer, and in what little spare time he had he secretly wrote what he thought was excellent poetry.

On completion of his second year of law school he went to his father and told him that he had decided that he was not suited for a career in law and was going to take up journalism.

His father was enraged, and, though his son was a full-grown man, took off his belt and gave him a sound thrashing and told him that if he ever again entertained any thoughts about not finishing law school, he would beat him within an inch of his life.

A mine explosion killed his father before he could see

his son graduate and receive his law degree. Within two years his mother died.

Seeing no future as a practicing attorney in a town where all law was dictated by the iron rule of the mine owners, Brannigan sold the house, moved to Chicago, and took a job as a copywriter with the now-defunct *Express Journal*. Within a year he was writing their editorials. Palmer Compton, the owner and publisher of the paper, asked him one day if he would be interested in earning extra money by writing speeches for Lyle Barton, the Democratic nominee for governor. Brannigan agreed to do it. Although the speeches were by far the best heard throughout the state, Barton lost the race because he became involved in a scandal with a married woman in the closing weeks of the campaign. But Brannigan was offered a position with Barton's law firm.

He accepted, because the newspaper went bankrupt, and was content though he was little more than a law clerk. Five years later he married his secretary and began raising a family. He had become trapped in the unglamorous confines of corporate law in which the firm specialized, much as his father had been trapped in the mines. The only cases Brannigan handled in a courtroom were criminal cases for influential friends of Barton and his partner. Neither of those gentlemen ever set foot in criminal court. The cases usually involved wealthy youngsters who, having too much money and little or no responsibilities, got themselves into one scrape after another. One by one Brannigan won his cases. Barton and his partner found that Brannigan's courtroom oratory was earning him the reputation of being one of the best defense attorneys in the state. Barton began to have increasing respect for his employee. Eventually, he made Brannigan a partner of the firm.

Brannigan secretly enjoyed walking into the various courtrooms now, and after signing his name as attorney of record for his client, adding the firm's name, "Barton, Macklin, and Brannigan."

When Lyle Barton's seventeen-year-old son became involved in a wild drinking party in Humboldt Park which

resulted in the drowning of a young girl in the lagoon, and led to the subsequent arrest of the boy with a manslaughter charge file against him, Brannigan assumed that the case would go to one of the top criminal law firms in the city. Barton did consult with a number of prominent criminal lawyers, and surprisingly was told that while they would be happy to prepare the case, they would want Brannigan to handle the trial itself. So Barton asked his junior partner to take the case. Brannigan knew that he lacked the experience to prepare a major criminal case, but he was sure that if he handled the courtroom work he would win. He told this to Barton and said that he would do it only if a seasoned firm handled the preparation, and engaged him as an associate counsel for the trial.

Barton selected a firm to be the attorneys of record. The papers had not let up on the case since the day his son had been arrested. Each day brought new pictures of the death scene, pictures of the dead girl, and statements from her family who, unlike the wealthy Bartons, lived in a modest middle-class neighborhood. When the case finally came to trial, the public interest generated by the press resulted in a virtual army of spectators jamming the courtroom, spilling out into the halls of the criminal court building, while hundreds waited outside.

One long-time courtroom aide told the press that he had not seen so many people since the Leopold and Loeb case in the twenties, when it was rumored that some people were offering one hundred dollars to get a seat in the courtroom to listen to the impassioned plea by the great Clarence Darrow.

The case never reached the jury. By the end of the trial's fourth day, when the state rested its case, Brannigan had so thoroughly and completely either discredited witnesses or broken them down to inconsistent fumbling answers by his superb cross-examination, that the judge had no choice but to grant Brannigan's motion for a directed verdict of acquittal on the grounds that the state had failed to prove a *prima facie* case.

Several days after the trial, Brannigan received an in-

vation to luncheon from Mayor Whalen. The mayor's present state's attorney had turned down a bid to run for reelection, preferring to accept an offer from the university to become dean of the law school. The mayor needed a popular figure, and had heard that Brannigan enjoyed his newly acquired prominence, and would probably jump at the chance to run for public office.

Brannigan did jump at the offer, and won easily over his Republican opponent.

He took the oath of office the following January. After that he could be seen dining almost nightly with judges, and the most respected men in the legal profession. He promoted a beautiful twenty-two-year-old girl as his personal secretary.

Soon the girl resigned to become his mistress, and he leased an apartment for her in a quiet neighborhood on the West Side. He soon discovered that the salary paid the state's attorney was far from adequate if he were to continue his double life and the high living he had so quickly adapted to in his first few months in office. So the contingency fund for which he need not account provided the money he needed: he thought no one would be the wiser.

Each time a convention dealing with law or any phase of law enforcement was held in Miami, he would send his paramour down two or three days before he left and have her check into one of the many luxury hotels on Miami Beach. He himself would register at Danker's Inn across Biscayne Bay on the Miami side. He established this pattern so that his mistress would be far enough away to minimize the chances of running into anyone he knew. Many Chicago politicians and socialites stayed at Danker's when they visited Florida, mostly to do a little gambling in the glittering casino. Registered there, he knew he would meet people he knew in Chicago, and could casually inform them that he was in Miami for this convention or that.

When the attorney general's auditors first descended on the office, the only fear he felt was for the possibility that they might learn of his affair, and inform the newspapers.

He was certain that anything else they uncovered could be explained away. He failed to realize just how careless he had been with that account over the past four years.

Morrissey's scathing denouncement of him at the press conference brought him to the edge of panic. He knew then that if there were to be any chance for survival he needed help from Whalen.

The mayor was known for the brutal way he treated anyone involved in any situation that brought even the slightest taint of scandal to his administration. He was more vicious than he had ever been when Brannigan phoned him at his home at two o'clock in the morning. For a full forty-five minutes Brannigan endured the insults Whalen hurled at him. After that he swore that someday he would even the score with Whalen for the humiliation, even if it took him the rest of his life.

Humiliation continued over the next two days. Sneaking in the back entrance at the Richmond-Carlton; not being allowed to tell his side of the story; the final insult was being forced to follow the dictates of the mayor's fair-haired boy, Brennan, whom Brannigan thoroughly hated. Besides, he was in complete disagreement with Brennan's proposals, which he thought left him wide open by classifying so many of the checks as bonus money.

Brannigan's preparation for the press conference the following morning took most of the night. At ten-thirty that next morning he summoned Warren Powell to his office. To Powell's amazement, there wasn't a trace of the groveling, whining coward with whom he had spent the past forty-eight hours. Brannigan somehow had regained his confident air.

"Sit down, Warren," he said, smiling.

The chief of the criminal division took a chair opposite his boss. He wondered what part he would have to play when they met with the reporters.

Brannigan handed him a neatly typed five-page report from a thick pile on his desk and said, "That is the complete list of checks from the contingency fund. There is an asterisk before several of the check numbers. They indicate that those checks were used in connection with

cases we were handling." He pointed to a stack of files sitting on a chair and continued. "There are the cases. They are in numerical order according to the list you have. Each time I mention one of them I want you to hand it to the reporters and politely remind them that these files are not a matter of public record and request that they abstain from making any reference to the cases or to any person mentioned in them. I will answer all questions. If they direct any questions to you, just pause for a few seconds and I will break in and make the answer for you. Any questions?"

"None," Powell said, greatly relieved that he had been taken off the hook. "And thanks, Bill."

"Don't worry. I'll have them eating out of my hand."

Twelve folding chairs had been placed in his office and were arranged in two rows directly in front of his desk. He was smiling as the newsmen filed in and took their seats. Ironical, he thought, twelve men. A jury.

When the reporters were seated, Brannigan said, "As you know, gentlemen, the attorney general has in his possession all the checks and checkbooks relating to my contingency-fund account. This presents no problem; I have kept a record of all those checks and their disposition. Mr. Powell will furnish each of you with a copy of my records. I intend to explain in detail each transaction, and you will be able to follow along with your copy and make notes for any questions you may have when I have finished."

The state's attorney lit a cigarette and joked with one of the reporters about his predicament while Powell was busy handing out copies of the report. Powell thought it was deliberate suicide to let them have the report.

"Is there anyone now who does not have a copy?" Brannigan asked smoothly. Each reporter had his copy and all nodded that they were ready. "Before we start I must make two things crystal clear so that there will be no misunderstandings later, or, as sometimes happens, misquotes made." The laughter was friendly and encouraging to the state's attorney, and he continued. "Number one. Illinois State Statute 401.715, Revised Edition, out-

lines the laws governing the financial structure of my office, from the setting of the amount of my salary to the explanation of the purposes of the contingency fund. I will not waste your time by quoting the entire section as it covers nine pages and I know you will probably research it yourselves at your leisure. I would like, however, to direct your attention to a small portion of it." He smiled warmly at his audience, then picked up a large volume open on his desk.

"Section sixteen states as follows: 'The state's attorney shall be allowed to maintain a contingency fund, and this fund shall be incorporated into the yearly budget. The amount deposited in this account shall not exceed thirty thousand dollars in any one County with the exception of Cook County. The maximum amount the County of Cook shall receive shall not exceed seventy thousand dollars. This fund shall be maintained for the purposes of making payments of cash monies to informers, and/or others, as compensation for information and/or other services rendered in the investigation of criminal cases and activities where direct payment by check would endanger the secrecy of the persons involved, and possible risk of bodily harm to said parties, should their identity become known.' "

Brannigan closed the book, and set it down on the corner of the desk. "I just want to impress upon you gentlemen the fact that what I am about to reveal to you today I am not required to do by law. You will learn exactly when and where monies were spent, and will be shown the case files relating to the checks involved. Nothing contained in these files is a matter of public record. I must ask your cooperation in keeping the identity of these people and their cases secret."

Brannigan then began to explain each transaction. He was using his best courtroom manner, pausing only to see that the proper case files were distributed to the newsmen.

His strategy paid off: by the time he was down to check number seventy-four, the reporters waived looking at any more of the case files: it appeared they would take

his word as to their contents. That was exactly what he wanted.

It took just short of two hours to complete the list. When he finished, Brannigan had his secretary serve coffee and doughnuts. He wanted the question-and-answer phase of the conference to be held in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible. Their questions would indicate what they were thinking, and he counted on his answers to mold their opinions.

The state's attorney leaned back comfortably in his chair, smiled at the group, and said, "You may ask your questions now, gentlemen, and I shall do my best to give you frank and honest answers."

"Mr. State's Attorney," Hughes of the *Examiner* asked, "what was accomplished by attending all those conventions?"

"If you will refer to your list, Mr. Hughes, you will see that the organizations sponsoring those conventions are deeply involved in the various fields of law enforcement and judicial procedure. The new concept of rehabilitation within our penal system alone, as discussed in the seminars and workshops during the last convention of the National Institute of Prisons and Prison Reform, in my opinion should have been attended by every criminal prosecutor in the country. If you will note some of the plaques on my walls, you can see that I am deeply involved, too, in improving our judicial system. I have been elected president of the United States Association of Prosecuting Attorneys for two years in a row. I have learned a great deal by attending those conventions, and as a result I have been able to update many of our procedures and increase the efficiency of operations in this office."

"Thank you, sir," Hughes said. Then he asked, "Just one other thing. The expenses incurred in attending those conventions were paid for out of the contingency fund. Doesn't the county provide funds for this purpose somewhere in your budget?"

Brannigan frowned and said, "Unfortunately no. I fear that our county budget director refuses to recognize the growing need for active participation on a national level

by our elected officials. I might point out, Mr. Hughes, that before I ever attended my first convention as the state's attorney, I requested an opinion from the corporation counsel's office as to the legality of withdrawing funds from the contingency-fund account to cover my expenses. Mr. Heeney advised me that by the broad nature of the uses for which the fund was created, this purpose was perfectly legal. He further indicated to me that this practice is not unusual and that my predecessors in the past also followed that procedure."

Brannigan had stepped out on a limb in answering that question. He had never once spoken to Tom Heeney about the fund. He was gambling on that fact that if Heeney were to be questioned, he would not recall whether or not the mythical conversation ever took place.

"Mr. Brannigan," Morton Savage began, "I think I am safe in saying that I can speak for my colleagues here today when I say that although you have been gracious enough to furnish us with case files, and your various personal records, that most of the material has only justified what we have already conceded as being bona-fide prior to this meeting. The convention trips, Christmas parties, paying of informers and the rest of expenses incurred in the operation of your office are not cause for any great concern, and hardly deserve mention in our columns. The real crux of the matter, I believe, lies in the distribution of many thousands of dollars to employees in your office. We would like to know what your reasoning was and whether or not the charge that what you did was illegal is justified by law?"

Savage was the only journalist Brannigan feared. He was not one to be taken in by Brannigan's charm and eloquence. The state's attorney knew that he could in no way afford to have anyone start questioning his employees only to have it brought to light that the bonus money he actually had paid out was no more than ten percent of the total he was claiming. If Savage could not be convinced, the ball game was over.

"Mr. Savage, it is certainly no secret that during the spring and fall terms of the grand jury the volume of work

handled by this office is overwhelming. We are badly understaffed, and although I go before the Committee on Help of the County Board every year, I am always turned down in my requests for additional personnel.

"In addition to the investigative work required before we are prepared to present evidence to secure criminal indictments on cases that have come through this office, we must also provide investigators for the various probes the grand jury conducts on its own. Since we lack a sufficient number of trained men, my people must put in many hours overtime. As you know, the county no longer pays its employees for overtime, preferring to grant compensatory leave time instead. Unfortunately I am forced to deny requests by my people to take time off, thus creating a situation whereby the county in effect is saying, 'Work overtime, but we won't pay you.'

"The work turned in by the investigative department must be processed and completed for presentation before the grand-jury term expires. Result? More overtime hours necessary for the prosecuting and clerical staffs. If you care to check, you will find that since I have been in office the percentage of 'no bills' has been reduced by almost forty percent.

"I could not in good conscience keep asking these dedicated people to continue putting in overtime without some sort of compensation, so I began giving small bonuses. I took the liberty of interpreting the letter of the law in State Statute 401.715. Quote: 'Payments of cash monies to informers AND OTHERS, as compensation for information and/or OTHER SERVICES rendered.' Unquote. Since no clear-cut definition as to who 'others' are is mentioned, and in that my people provided services in the investigation of criminal cases and activities, I feel justified in my actions. If we can afford to give money to known criminals for information that in far too many instances proves to be worthless, I see nothing wrong, much less illegal, in giving a few dollars to dedicated people whose work has proved invaluable."

Brannigan held his breath, hoping for some indication from Savage that he was satisfied with his answer.

Savage glanced at his notes briefly. "It seems to me that the amount of money involved here is out of proportion to the quote 'few dollars' unquote you refer to."

Brannigan shook his head, smiling. "Not when you consider that the amount covers four years. Divide that by the number of employees working here and you come up with a very small sum for each."

Several of the newsmen then asked him what he thought the effect of Morrissey's charges might have on the upcoming election: Brannigan knew then he had them convinced.

After the reporters left, Powell smiled admiringly at his boss and said, "You've pulled it off, Bill! They believed you!"

"Let's wait and see what they print before we start doing any celebrating." Then he said slowly, "Warren, I want you to call a meeting of six of our most trusted investigators. The assignment I want them to take must be kept so completely secret that I don't even want them to tell their wives."

"Sure, Bill."

"I want Committeeman Brennan watched twenty-four hours a day," Brannigan said, eyes narrowed. "I want to know every move he makes, every place he goes, and everyone he sees. I don't want him out of sight of our men from now on."

After the ward meeting on the way back to his apartment, Dude had Mike stop for the late afternoon and early morning editions of the newspapers to see how Brannigan had fared in his press conference that morning. He sent Mike home, and went upstairs, deciding to retire early. He took a cold shower, made a pot of coffee, and settled down to read the papers.

The two afternoon tabloids gave the conference full coverage. One had gone so far as to print the entire contents of the state's attorney's five-page report. All the byline articles praised Brannigan for making the records, particularly the one by Hughes, public, and the opinion generally was that although the state's attorney had somewhat

stretched the letter of the law, he could not be accused of theft since the money had been used for his employees, not himself.

Dude paused and lit a cigarette. He had greatly underestimated Brannigan. Distributing that report, along with all the confidential files, was an excellent piece of strategy.

The three morning papers viewed Brannigan's actions as highly irregular but did not believe that Morrissey's accusations were justified.

Dude saved Savage's column till last. The acknowledged dean of Chicago's reporters had the greatest following of any. The views Savage expressed were generally taken as gospel by the majority of his readers. He himself could literally make or break the state's attorney.

BRANNIGAN BARES RECORDS DENIES ANY WRONGDOING

By

Morton Savage

Staff Writer

In an unprecedented move by State Attorney William Brannigan at his press conference yesterday, he allowed reporters to study his personal records, pertaining to the now-famous contingency fund.

Disregarding the law that states he is in no way compelled to make public the disposition of funds from the account in question, Mr. Brannigan gave to newsmen a step-by-step accounting of every check that had been drawn on the account since he took office nearly four years ago.

The reporters were also allowed to see the case files the State Attorney used to document the various expenditures.

This reporter is satisfied with Mr. Brannigan's documentation of the majority of the checks.

I find, however, that his broad explanation of distributing thousands of dollars to his employees, although not illegal per se, extremely vague as to proper documentation.

One check in particular, in the amount of eight thousand dollars, was cashed, and according to Brannigan, passed out to deserving employees. Nowhere in the data furnished us was a list of just who these deserving public servants were.

At best, Mr. Brannigan's handling of the account can only be viewed as using poor judgment. Charges of outright theft by reform candidate for State Attorney, James Morrissey, now lie unsubstantiated in the light of Mr. Brannigan's revelations.

To prevent a recurrence of this kind of situation in the future it would be wise for our legislators to either abolish contingency funds or rewrite the present laws governing their intended uses.

But Mr. Brannigan appears to have vindicated himself of the charges leveled against him.

By God, Dude thought, the bastard got away with it! He'll be reelected in November without a doubt.

Whatever exhilaration he felt vanished fast when he turned to Kolb's gossip column. The last paragraph of the column said: "BAD TASTE DEPT: Coosome two-some seen in the lounge at the Alton, Fourth Ward Pol. "Dude" Brennan and recently widowed Lynn Sullivan, the mayor's secy., holding hands while hubby John's body lies in state at O'Keefe's Funeral Home. Widow Sullivan's discarded mail makes very interesting reading."

Dude, raging, paced the living room trying to decide what to do. The last line of the column explained why Mike had failed to find the letter Lynn dropped. Now Kolb would try to find out who put up the money at the university: if he failed, he would probably publish the letter in his column.

It didn't seem likely that the columnist had checked the hotel register. Dude had used a fictitious name, but thought it was possible that the clerk had recognized him or Lynn.

He decided he had to find Kolb and have it out with him. It was impossible to repair the damage, but he could make some attempt to prevent future trouble.

As he was about to leave, the phone rang.

It was Lynn.

"Hi, honey. I guess you've seen Kolb's hatchet job."

"Mother did. She just read it to me over the phone.

What are we going to do? What if Jeff or Linda see it? Or worse, hear about it from their classmates at school?" She sounded on the verge of tears.

He could think of only one solution. "You and the kids pack your things tonight and grab the first train out of here tomorrow for Miami. I'll call Fred Danker and tell him you're coming. He'll see that you're taken care of. I'm going to see Kolb and try to get him to print a retraction. I doubt that he will."

"What about the letter, Dude?" she asked.

"At this point he can't be sure of its value or he would have blabbed about it instead of just insinuating he had a hot item. Besides, if your unidentified benefactor turned out to be a relative of yours, Kolb would be wide open for a lawsuit. I'll try to get him to drop the whole thing," he said, without assurance.

"I'll get ready to leave as soon as we can. Dude . . . will you call me down there as soon as you know anything?"

"Of course I will," he answered. "If I'm not here in the morning leave word at the desk with Max about which train you are taking and what time it arrives in Miami."

"I will," she said.

Dude hung up and the phone immediately began to ring again. He thought. That has to be Whalen.

He could still hear the phone ringing as he stepped into the elevator.

Burtram Kolb usually held court in the early evening hours at Grover's, a fashionable and expensive supper club just outside the Loop. Dude arrived there shortly after ten o'clock. He went directly to the bar and asked, "Is Kolb here tonight?"

"Yes, sir," the bartender replied. "In the dining room." Two drinks later, Dude had one of the waiters find out if Kolb was alone: he was.

Kolb, busily writing something on the back of an envelope, failed to see Dude head toward him. Dude had seen the columnist on several occasions but had never spoken to him. He was a short thick-necked man with a huge stomach. He was completely bald, and the top of his head gave the appearance of being freshly waxed. The newspaperman put his pencil down and was reaching for his coffee cup when he saw Dude. For a split second he looked scared to death of the well-built six-foot-two politician. Then, forcing a smile, he said, "Well, well. If it isn't the mayor of the fourth ward himself. Would you care to join me?"

Dude sat down.

"What's on your mind, Brennan?" The smile had disappeared.

"A retraction in your next column."

"Come now, you know I never print retractions."

"How are you fixed for slander suits?"

"Go ahead." Kolb smiled.

Dude knew that it had been a mistake to try to talk to this obese disgrace to the newspaper profession. Mentioning the letter would only compound his error. He rose, looked down at Kolb, and said icily, "Sorry to have disturbed you, Mr. Kolb."

"Be sure you read Sunday's column," the columnist said.

"You sonofabitch," Dude whispered, just loud enough for Kolb to hear.

Dude returned to the bar and ordered a double martini, hoping the alcohol would erase some of his feeling of frustration. It didn't, so he ordered another. When the bartender served his fourth drink he eyed Dude suspiciously for any sign that his customer had reached his limit.

Dude recognized the look the bartender was giving him. He became indignant, started to say something, but thought better of it. He fished around in his pocket and found a nickel. He made his way a little unsteadily to the phone booth in the men's room, and gave the operator the number of the Forest Park restaurant.

"Hello?" an unfamiliar voice said.

"I have to talk to Mr. C.," Dude said, trying hard not to slur his words.

"He ain't here."

"Look, this is Mr. Brennan. It's urgent I talk to him at once."

"Wait a minute."

Dude could hear the unidentified voice consulting with someone. Another unidentified voice.

"Mr. Brennan? He should be at Angelo's."

"Thank you," Dude said, feeling quite clever for finding out the whereabouts of the syndicate chief.

He returned to the bar, finished his drink and paid the tab, but left no tip.

Dude took a cab to the Café Venice on Rush Street. He never noticed the two men who followed his cab in a black Ford sedan that had been parked halfway down the block.

Angelo Bertolini met Dude at the door. A call from Forest Park had alerted him that the committeeman, drunk, was on his way over.

"Hi, Angelo." Dude grinned.

"Come on in, Dude," the young Italian said, smiling. "You look as though you could do with some coffee and something to eat."

"I got to see Mr. C. They told me he was having dinner here."

Bertolini escorted his guest to a secluded booth, and, when he was seated, said, "Mr. C. is dining in private and left strict orders not to be disturbed. But seeing it's you, I'll tell him you are here." Then he snapped his fingers for a waitress and ordered a pot of black coffee for Dude and the special of the house, hoping to sober the ward leader up before Conforti saw him. Next Angelo went to his waitress, Nancy, and told her to change to her street clothes as quickly as possible and join Dude for dinner.

When the two men who had followed the committeeman walked in a few moments later, the restaurant owner knew immediately that they were the law. There was no reason to refuse them service so he led them to a table

where they would be unable to observe the ward leader's booth.

Angelo returned to Dude just as the waitress was introducing herself, and explained, "I asked Nancy to join you for dinner, Dude. I'm treating tonight so that gives me the right to select a pretty girl to keep you company."

Dude just smiled, sipping coffee. By the time the food was served, Dude was beginning to sober up.

After the meal, Angelo sat down next to Dude, and suggested to his waitress that it would be an ideal time for her to visit the powder room. When the girl had gone, he looked at Dude seriously and said, "Two plainclothes cops followed you in here. Mr. C. is upset about that, and the fact that you came here after having one too many. He says that if you have anything to tell him, you should tell me and I'll relay it to him."

"Do me a favor, Angelo?" Dude asked. "When I came here tonight I wasn't quite myself. Please tell Mr. C. that I apologize. It won't happen again." He was now almost totally sober.

As Angelo went unobtrusively to the private dining room, Dude was thankful he had not accomplished what he had set out to do. It was ludicrous to imagine that Conforti would consent to have his torpedoes send Kolb to the emergency room at Cook County Hospital with a busted skull.

The young waitress Nancy returned from the ladies' room and sat down again opposite Dude. Soon the young restaurant proprietor returned to Dude and said, "Mr. C. says that he understands perfectly and would like you to call him sometime over the weekend." Bertolini winked at the committeeman and said, "I think it would be an excellent idea if Nancy here were to leave with you, because of the two gentlemen I mentioned earlier."

Dude nodded, unsmiling, and helped the girl out of the booth. When they reached the street Dude flagged down a passing taxi and told the driver to go slow enough so that he would catch the red light at the corner of Rush and Chestnut. The cabby's timing was perfect, and when the taxi had come to a complete stop Dude looked back

through the rear window. He saw the two detectives hurrying to the Ford. Grinning, he placed a hand on the waitress's knee and gave the driver the address of the Royale.

When the cab reached the hotel Dude pressed some bills into the girl's hand, paid the driver, and told him to take the young lady wherever she wanted to go.

He deliberately left the apartment in darkness when he entered and went straight to the living-room window and peered out. The Ford had parked halfway down the block, and he could make out the dim outline of two men sitting in the front seat.

Dude called Frank Quinncannon's home number. Frank's wife, Norma, answered and told Dude that the detective had just gone out to the drugstore for some ice cream and that she would have him return the call as soon as he got back. Dude waited nervously for several minutes before the phone rang.

"Yeah, partner, what's up?"

"Frank, sometime today I developed a tail. Two guys in an unmarked Ford. Can you find out who ordered it?"

The policeman whistled softly, and said, "That is a large order, my friend. However, I will see what I can find out. Stick by the phone and I'll call you back as soon as I can."

He hung up before Dude could answer. Thirty minutes later the phone jangled.

"Dude, I checked all the bureaus in the department and drew a blank, so I called one of my units and had my men cruise past your place and pick up the license number of the stakeout car." He paused. "It's a county car assigned to the state's attorney's office."

Dude thanked him and hung up.

Chapter 10

Lynn called before seven o'clock the following morning and caught Dude in the middle of shaving. His hangover was classic and the four cups of coffee, combined with two glasses of tomato juice liberally laced with Worcestershire sauce he had downed earlier, had failed to relieve his misery. When he picked up the phone, his gruff hello was anything but pleasant.

"Did I wake you up, Dude?" she asked softly.

"No, honey, I've been up for hours. I wanted to get an early start so I could enjoy my hangover much longer," he snapped, sarcastically.

"Well, you don't have to bite my head off! I just wanted to let you know that I booked reservations on the Sunshine Dixie Flyer leaving Union Station at one o'clock this afternoon. It arrives in Miami Monday night at seven."

"I'm sorry I growled at you, sweetheart," he said, and meant it. "I would go down to the station with you, but I don't think we ought to be seen together in public."

"I guess you're right," she said, sounding disappointed. "Were you able to talk to that nasty reporter?"

"No," he lied, "but I'll catch up with him before the weekend is over."

"I'll say good-bye for now, darling," she whispered, then added: "Please call me Monday night."

He was in no mood for the "darling" bit. He said good-bye and was about to hang up when he heard her say, "I'm going to miss you very much, Dude." He pretended he hadn't heard the remark and quickly broke the con-

nection, hoping she would not call back and start the whole thing over again.

He looked out the window to see if Brannigan's men were still watching the place. The Ford sedan that had been following him last night was gone, but in its place was a green two-door Buick. This car probably belonged to one of the two men sitting in it. Damn good thing, he thought, that Frank got a make on the Ford: he might not have been able to tie the Buick in with Brannigan's office.

After he showered, and dressed he called Mike: no answer. He was mildly surprised.

Yet the Packard was parked at the curb in front of the office when Dude arrived. The office was empty. He thought that Mike was probably having coffee, so he walked down to the diner. It was empty save for the owner who was hunched over the counter reading the morning paper. Dude decided that he might as well have another cup of coffee. Sooner or later the liquid was bound to have an effect on the hangover.

"How about some java, Larry?" he asked.

Looking up from his paper, the man grinned and said, "Coming up, Dude."

The owner pushed a steaming mug in front of the ward leader, than asked, "How goes everything?"

Judging from the grin on the man's face Dude decided that he had read Kolb's column. "Fine," he replied, then asked, "Have you seen Mike this morning?"

The man snapped his fingers. "Oh, yeah, I almost forgot. He was in a little while ago and said to give you these." He reached into his pocket, pulled out a ring of keys, and handed them to Dude. Mike's keys to the Packard and to the office.

"Did he say anything, Larry?" Dude inquired.

"Just to give you the keys, that you would understand," Larry replied. "Anything wrong?"

"No." He dropped a fifty-cent piece on the counter and walked out without finishing his coffee.

He spent the next three hours in the office attending to

ward business he had neglected during the Brannigan mess. He filled six sheets of a legal pad with notes for Bea.

At eleven o'clock he called the mayor at his home and the maid informed him that His Honor had gone to the office. Whalen's private line at City Hall was busy and Dude had to call several times before he reached him.

"Jim? Dude. I'd like to see you today if you aren't too busy."

"Where are you now?" Whalen asked.

"At the ward office," he answered.

"Get over here as soon as you can, Dude; we are in trouble again," the mayor said gravely.

"On my way. I'll be there in about fifteen minutes," Dude said and hung up.

He noticed that the Buick followed his car all the way downtown. He parked the Packard in a no-parking zone on the Clark Street side of City Hall, and waited until he saw the Buick turn right and head west on Washington Boulevard. Obviously they intended to circle the block and try for a parking spot where they would be able to keep an eye on Dude's car without being seen.

Because it was Saturday, the public entrance to the mayor's office was locked. He walked down the hall and knocked on the door of the private entrance. Danny Maher let him in and after exchanging greetings, both took seats in front of Whalen's desk and waited quietly until the mayor was finished speaking on the phone.

Whalen merely nodded to Dude, then began. "Yesterday afternoon Donohue posted the list of firms whose bids had been accepted for the new subway construction. Teichner's outfit was given the nod, even though they were not the low bidder. No problem there, though, that can be justified by the fact that their's is the largest outfit and that they have a good track record on other municipal projects." He paused, lit a cigar, then continued. "Now here comes the kinky part. I have ten thousand shares of their stock registered in my brother-in-law's name. Last night I received a call from Jack Bergen who

works with Savage on the *Examiner*. He says Savage is going to claim that the selection had been rigged in Teichner's favor, and on Monday Savage is going to get a list of the stockholders in the company in the hopes he can tie someone in with me or Donohue."

"Where the hell is Ward?" Dude interrupted.

"Somewhere up in Wisconsin for the weekend with that goddamned rowboat of his and I can't reach him," Whalen said disgustedly.

"Do you think he or any of his relatives have any of the stock?" Dude asked.

"I doubt it," Whalen said, scowling. "He got burned in '29 and since then has been preaching that anyone who buys or owns stock should have his head examined. But we can't be sure until we talk to him, and as I said before, he can't be reached."

Dude felt sure that Ward Donohue was in the clear: he understood now why Boyd Teichner made the payoff in cash instead of stock.

"Son," Whalen began anew in a tone of voice that was altogether too fatherly to suit Dude, "I am going to ask you to do something for me that I would never ask in a hundred years if it were not for the fact that my career is on the line now, and if I go down, you go down too."

"Go on," Dude said, narrowing his eyes.

Before continuing, the mayor ceremoniously lit another cigar. Dude's anger was mounting. "I want to draw up a dummy stock sale to you from my brother-in-law. It will be back-dated six months. If anyone asks, all you will have to say is that you put the certificates in your safe-deposit box at your bank and hadn't gotten around to having them formally transferred. I can think of no other way. Fred certainly can't just dump them on the market on Monday; that would be too obvious. How about it, Dude? Will you do it?"

"You know, you really have a lot of guts to ask me to do a thing like that!" Dude said hotly. Then he added, "When Savage learns that I have a piece of the action in

Teichner's company it will give him some nice ammunition to use against me, and he will."

"I don't think so, son," the mayor said quietly. "You are not in quite the same position as me and Ward. Besides, if I get smeared, you will have about as much chance as a snowball in hell of becoming the next mayor."

Dude sat there for several minutes, holding down his anger, then reluctantly gave in. "All right, where is the goddamn paper? I'll sign it."

"It will be ready first thing Monday morning," Whalen said as he came from behind his desk to shake Dude's hand. The mayor then opened his portable bar and poured out three shots of Irish whiskey and invited his guests to join him in a toast. As they raised their glasses, the mayor said, "To better city government!" All three laughed.

Dude turned to the city leader and said, "I have some more business to discuss."

As Whalen walked back to his desk, he said, "If you mean that filthy lie that Kolb printed about you and Lynn, I already know about it. I haven't figured out how yet, but you can be assured that before this day is out that slob will be through for good in this town. How did Lynn take it?"

"She and the kids left for Miami this afternoon for a couple of weeks at my suggestion. It will be good for her to get away for a while, and lessen the chances of the two older children hearing about that smear from any of their friends."

"Fine, fine!" Whalen said. "Anything else? I would like to get home and see my wife for a change."

Dude nodded. "Brannigan started having me tailed some time yesterday. He has two men following me day and night."

Whalen's mouth dropped open and he roared, "That motherless bastard! Are you absolutely sure?"

Dude said grimly, "I had the tag checked out on the car they were using last night and it was a county car assigned to his office. And I got a good look at the two who were

following me today. Believe it or not one of the men was Al Moran. I sponsored the sonofabitch."

The mayor was seething. He drummed his fingers on the desk for a few moments, then said, "He's finished now. I don't care anymore whether we lose that office or not. I'm going to feed his ass to the wolves. By the time I'm through with him he will wish to God that he had never been born."

Maher looked at his boss quizzically. "You realize of course that means giving up almost four hundred jobs."

"Not necessarily," Whalen answered.

"What are you driving at?" Dude asked.

"A deal. What else!" Whalen snapped.

"With Morrissey?" Maher asked.

"Why not? We've made deals before," the mayor said.

"Not with a reformer like Morrissey," Dude protested.

"He has the fever, son." Whalen was smiling now. "And when a man has the fever he will sell himself out at a very low price and convince himself that he hasn't really been bought and paid for at all. It will only be a compromise he'll tell himself, and that satisfies his conscience. There isn't a politician alive today who will not compromise to be assured of being elected."

Dude wasn't completely convinced. "Do you think our bargaining position is strong enough?"

The mayor chuckled. This was his meat and potatoes. He knew that there wasn't a man alive who could come anywhere near him when it came to politics. Hell, he was weaned on them! He was now thoroughly enjoying his role as the teacher giving his two young protégés a valuable lesson in the art of wheeling and dealing.

He smiled warmly at the two men and said. "We couldn't be in a better position to deal with our crusading Mr. Morrissey than we are right at this moment. Brannigan pulled off the coup of the year at that press conference yesterday. He spoon-fed that garbage to those reporters and made them think it was honey. Even Savage finally fell for it. The papers have given him a clean bill of health, resolving any doubts the voters might have had.

"Morrissey is a practical man. With only a few weeks left in the campaign, he knows nothing short of a miracle will give him any chance. The odds are a million to one that he'll stumble onto another potential scandal at this late date, and two million to one that he could capitalize on it. Even if he did, he would still have to contend with the Cook County Regular Democratic organization, the most powerful political machine this country has ever seen. I'll concede that he can and probably will carry all of the county outside of the city. There isn't one suburb that isn't solid Republican. But that is all he'll carry—unless we give him a little help."

Whalen was pleased with the way in which he had assessed the situation. Now he would see how closely his students had been paying attention. "How would you gentlemen proceed from here?"

Dude was the first to answer. "We give Brannigan's job to Morrissey and, in return, keep half of the patronage jobs. Possibly we ask that his man who is running against Emmett Gorman drop out of the race just for insurance."

"Good," Whalen said, beaming. "And you, Danny?"

"I see it the same way, except I don't think I would be as obvious. I wouldn't ask that Gorman's opponent quit," Maher said.

"Both of you are on the right track," Whalen said, "but I think you tend to be overly cautious. Not that that is bad; you must always be cautious to a degree in this business. However, in this particular case, we could ask for the moon and get it. We have nothing to lose, so why not go for the jackpot?"

"If Morrissey turns us down," Dude said, "then we leave Brannigan alone until after the election. Right?"

"Unfortunately, yes," Whalen replied.

"How do we dismantle Brannigan?" Maher asked.

"One of two ways," Whalen began. "First, I could demand he resign. But since he has started this funny business of having Dude followed, I believe we can safely assume that he has turned against us and would refuse.

Which leaves us no alternative but to knock him out of the box.

"We start by having the attorney general take depositions from every employee in the state's attorney's office, asking each one exactly how much 'big heart' gave them as a bonus. That should tumble Brannigan's little house of cards. The move will provide the attorney general with enough grounds to call for a special grand jury and enable him to request that the governor appoint a special prosecutor to preside over it.

"While Brannigan is hanging by his thumbs, we will give him a little something else to worry about. The press and the attorney general will be informed that he is fornicating with a Miss Carol Logan, his former secretary. This revelation should keep him occupied in his spare time trying to alibi his way out of not only having an affair, but how he happens to manage on his salary to maintain his home and that little love nest on Austin Boulevard. And in that connection, Miss Logan's deposition would have to be taken and she could tell about those wonderful trips she took to Miami as Mr. Brannigan's guest. I really don't believe Muriel Brannigan will understand.

"Finally, the *coup de grace* will be an investigation into his personal finances for the past four years. This whole plan of action could be presented to him in advance with all the gory details in an effort to get him to resign, but I personally feel that he does not merit such special consideration."

"Jesus jumping Christ!" Dude broke in. "Is there anything that you *don't* know about? The papers didn't even know that he was—or I should say *is*—playing around."

Whalen grinned and said, "If I wasn't aware of what was going on I couldn't have remained mayor all these years."

Maher was looking perplexed, then finally asked, "What I don't understand is, since Brannigan is practically a shoo-in now, why in hell should we give Morrissey a god-damn thing?"

"A good question, Danny," Whalen said. "But if you

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stop and think about it you will see that we have no other choice. We all agree that Brannigan is after Dude's hide and in all probability mine, too. Once he is reelected I can't fire him. I can only ask that he resign. He would welcome that, then he could tell me to kiss his ass. At that point he will be his own master for the next four years. Then God help us all."

"Why couldn't we scuttle him after the election?" Maher persisted.

Whalen shook his head negatively and said, "We could try, but by that time all of this business will be water under the bridge. Besides, the way things look now, the attorney general's people will probably clear him before election day. No, we must try for a deal."

The political warlord narrowed his eyes and said in a cold, deadly voice that sent a chill through Dude, "No sonofabitch has ever crossed me and gotten away with it. Mr. Brannigan will be no exception. What Whalen giveth, Whalen can also taketh away."

Dude and Danny Maher knew that they had just witnessed the formal sentencing of the state's attorney. No quarter would be given and no mercy would be shown. Ruthlessly and methodically a man was about to be stripped of his dignity and any sense of pride and beaten to the ground. He would be publicly disgraced before his friends and his family. Not because he had betrayed a public trust and had stolen money belonging to the taxpayers, but because he had dared to cross this five-foot-six political giant. Whalen would wield a flaming sword of destruction against Brannigan and by so doing would be posting his warning to all that would defy their master: not one would escape punishment.

The mayor lit a fresh cigar, leaned back in his huge leather chair, and said, "We are going to approach Morrissey with the following proposition: we will break Brannigan. And if after our chastisement he fails to resign voluntarily, I will give Morrissey my personal endorsement. In return, we will ask that fifty percent of the employees be retained. He will be given the choice of se-

lecting the positions he wants filled with his people. Those persons sacrificed by us will be given first choice of the jobs available in the city and the county. The resettling of our people will be your job, Danny. If you run short, let me know."

"I will definitely run short," Maher said.

"No problem," Whalen continued. "After the election there will be several of our precinct captains who will be getting the ax. Far too many of them loafed their way through the last election and there is no reason to believe that they will not do it again in November.

"Next, we are going to insist that the two men running against Gorman and Dude withdraw," Whalen said, then raised a hand to silence Dude who was about to say something. "A healthy percentage of the people in your ward, Dude, are family people. Churchgoers. Kolb's smear undoubtedly did you harm. We will not risk your losing even if the chance is only slight. You must run unopposed. We will also assure Mr. Morrissey that you will have your ward all tidied up by election day. That means every book shut down, all of the hookers chased away, and continued arrests and raids throughout the ward."

"When are we going to start?" Dude asked.

"Today," Whalen said, smiling and rubbing his pudgy hands together. "Danny, I want you to run over to Morrissey's campaign headquarters on LaSalle Street in the Merrick Building and get his campaign manager, that Carl—what's his name? Ah, Hassell. Carl Hassell, that's it. Bring him back with you."

"Right!" Maher said and hurried out the door.

After his patronage director had left, Whalen reached for his phone, and winking at Dude said, "Now I'll show you how to slit Kolb's throat."

He gave the operator the number of the columnist's newspaper and eased himself back into his chair. When he was connected he asked for the head of the advertising department. After a few moments, he said, "This is Mayor Whalen. With whom am I speaking?"

"Good afternoon, sir, I am Mr. Cramer, the director of sales and advertising," the man said pleasantly.

"I believe the city and county clerk's offices have several pages of legal notices to be printed in Monday's editions of your paper," Whalen said just as pleasantly, then lowered the boom. "I am authorizing you to cancel them, as well as any other advertising the city and county may have placed with you for future publication. Henceforth the city and county will no longer advertise in your paper."

"I don't understand, Your Honor," the dumbfounded executive stammered. "Have we done something wrong? Have there been any errors?"

"Not at all, Mr. Cramer," the mayor reassured him. "The quality of your work has always been of the highest."

"May I call you back, Mr. Mayor? I will have to speak with our publisher, Mr. Meeker. This is a most serious move, sir," the man said, panicky, dreading that somehow this drastic situation had in some way been his fault.

"You may, sir. My private number here at the office is Dearborn 7717. I will be here for the next hour or so. Thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Cramer," Whalen said, stifling a laugh and hanging up.

"And now, Dude," the mayor said, looking at his watch, "you are going to be enlightened by a study in economics. In approximately five minutes, Mr. Earl Meeker, whom I have never met, will be on that phone begging that his paper not be deprived of the thousands of dollars the city and county spend annually for advertising, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of dollars we spend for political advertising for this and future campaigns."

Dude just grinned. What could he possibly say? The man was absolutely fantastic. Here he was, boldly blackmailing one of the largest and most powerful newspapers in the city. And there was no question as to the outcome. He would succeed.

When the phone rang, Dude glanced at his watch. Five minutes on the head.

"Good afternoon, Mayor Whalen speaking."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, this is Earl Meeker of the

Examiner. Mr. Cramer, my sales director, has just given me some distressing news. It is my understanding that you have decided to discontinue placing the city and county advertising with our paper. Would you be kind enough, sir, to tell me the reasons for your decision? I am certain that whatever misunderstanding exists can be straightened out."

"Mr. Meeker," Whalen began, "I have always had great respect for your newspaper. I have always found that the *Examiner* leads the field in our city, and that your coverage of the news has always been factual and unbiased. I may have disagreed from time to time with some of your editorials and criticisms of me, but I certainly welcomed them. It grieves me to say that your splendid reputation is fast becoming tainted. It is my personal opinion that a family newspaper should not seek out a man to write unfounded stories about fine people, causing them and their loved ones to suffer undue humiliation. Factual news reporting is one thing, but filthy insinuations in a gossip column are quite another. In good conscience I can no longer permit the taxpayers' money to be spent supporting an organization that allows a degenerate to degrade the citizens of Chicago. As long as I am the mayor of this city, I must look to the welfare of our people."

"Mr. Mayor," Meeker practically wailed, "please believe me when I say that it has been brought to my attention only recently that Mr. Kolb has been stooping to the worst kind of yellow journalism, placing the paper open to slander and libel suits. Whether or not you continue to advertise with us is not important. What is important is that you, Mr. Mayor, have been good enough to let us know what the public is thinking. After all, as our leader you are certainly in a good position to know their attitudes. I am in total agreement with you, Your Honor, and I am pleased to tell you that as of this moment Mr. Kolb no longer works for this newspaper and I seriously doubt that any of the other papers in our city will care to welcome him to their staffs."

"I trust you have not misunderstood me, Mr. Meeker,"

Whalen said smoothly. "It was not my intention to influence you one way or another as regards Mr. Kolb's job. Your personnel problems do not interest me in the slightest."

The newspaper publisher knew just what the mayor wanted him to say. "The thought never crossed my mind, Your Honor. My decision to fire Mr. Kolb had been reached before you called today."

"Very well, Mr. Meeker. Since you have restored my faith in the greatness of your paper, I see no reason why we should not continue our fine relationship. Would you be kind enough to tell Mr. Cramer that I wish to continue advertising as usual?" Whalen said, smiling broadly and winking at Dude.

"I certainly shall, Your Honor, and thank you!" Whalen could hear Meeker let out a tremendous sigh before he hung up.

When he was sure the connection was broken, Dude laughed so hard that tears came to his eyes. And I was going to have Conforti's goons beat up on Kolb, he thought, what a jackass I am.

Whalen was pleased with Dude's reaction and said, "You may underestimate the power of the press, son, but never underestimate the power of the almighty dollar."

Dude was about to say something about Kolb when there was a knock at the office door. When he opened it, Danny and a tall fresh-faced good-looking young man were standing there. "This is Mr. Hassell, Dude," Maher said.

"Dude Brennan. Pleased to meet you," he said, and shook hands with the campaign manager.

After he had been introduced to the mayor, the young man said, "This is highly unorthodox, Your Honor!"

Before the young idealist could say more, Whalen gave him his best smile and said, "Horseshit."

Then he proceeded to explain in detail the offer he wanted Hassell to take back to his boss, concluding with, "I must have a definite answer today. You or Morrissey

can call me here within the hour. A simple yes or no will do."

After Morrissey's campaign manager left the office, Dude asked, "Aren't you pushing them a bit too hard? An hour isn't much time to reach such a big decision."

"Sure, I'm pushing them," Whalen said. "Either he wants it or he doesn't, and a month wouldn't make any difference as far as time is concerned."

While they waited, Danny Maher proceeded to get loaded on the mayor's best imported Irish whiskey, and soon fell asleep in a big green-leather easy chair. They waited nearly two hours before the phone rang.

Whalen crossed his fingers, then picked up the instrument and said, "Yeah?"

The mayor recognized Hassell's voice immediately. "We have decided that it would be in our best interests to accept your offer. My employer suggests that it would be wise for the present not to seem friendly. But I'm speaking for him, and you have his word that he will carry out his part of the deal."

"I understand. Thank you," Whalen said seriously. He replaced the instrument on its hook, leaned back in his chair and just stared at Dude.

"Come on, Jim!" Dude said impatiently. "What the hell did he say?"

Whalen shrugged. "What do you think he said?"

"No! Goddamn it!"

"On the contrary, my young friend," Whalen said, now smiling. "We have just bought ourselves a new state's attorney."

It was nearly five o'clock before the strategy meeting broke up and Dude had finally convinced Danny Maher to go home rather than go out celebrating. After he put Danny in a cab, he spotted the Buick parked in front of the Sherman Hotel. He walked to the corner and was waiting for the light to change so he could cross and go to the Randolph Corners Inn when he noticed that one of the

two men had emerged from the car and was headed his way. It was Al Moran.

Dude went into the bar, and was seated in the lounge when Moran walked in.

He walked to the booth where Dude sat, and asked, "Can I talk to you, Dude?"

"Why not?"

The investigator sat down as Eddie approached them with Dude's martini.

"Do you want a drink, Al?" Dude asked.

"No, thanks," Moran said.

When they were alone again, Moran pushed his hat back off his forehead and said, "Powell must have forgotten that you put me in this job or he never would have assigned me to the tail."

Dude sipped his drink, saying nothing.

"My partner," Moran continued, "thinks I came in here to see if you were meeting anyone, so I can't stay long. I don't know how long it will be before they find out you are my clout but until then I'll keep you posted on what they have in mind."

"I'd appreciate it, Al," the ward leader said, then added, "do you have any idea what they're looking for?"

Moran nodded. "Brannigan thinks he can tie you in with Conforti. I'll give you a tip Dude; stay away from that Guinea restaurant on Rush Street. They thought they had something on you last night but when they saw that you weren't there to meet the wop they were disappointed. I've got to go now; we are waiting for our relief and the bastards are almost three hours late already. It's too risky talking to you, so from now on I'll call you at the office."

Dude smiled at the detective and said, "Thanks, Al. For a while there I thought maybe you had gone over to the other side."

As Moran got up to leave, he said, "You know better than that, Dude. Brannigan is the last sonofabitch I would have loyalty for."

After the detective left, Dude signaled Eddie to bring

him the telephone. Until he heard Jackie's voice, he hadn't realized how much he had missed her.

"Hi, Irish, still love me?" she asked softly.

"You better believe it, kitten." Then he asked, "How are you feeling, love?"

"I think the worst is over. I was even able to eat a chicken dinner at noon. Dr. Kessell says that I'm recovering much faster than he expected and if I continue getting better I'll be out in half the time he thought."

"Marvelous," he said, wishing she were out already. "I was coming out today, but I got tied up again with the mayor. I'll be out there tomorrow though."

"Oh, I almost forgot," she said excitedly, "Dr. Kessell said that it would be all right if Kimmie came out. Would you bring her and Maude with you?"

"I'm glad, kitten. All three of us will be out tomorrow about one o'clock."

"Irish," she asked, sounding very serious, "do you still want to marry me?"

"More than anything in the world, kitten," he said huskily. "I love you, and I can't ever be happy until the two of us are together again forever."

When she didn't say anything for two or three minutes, he asked worriedly, "What's wrong, kitten?"

"You know me," she sniffled, "I'm bawling again."

He laughed and teased, "Are you going to be crying all the time after we are married?"

"No," she said in a small voice, "but I'm so happy, Irish."

"I know, kitten," he said quietly, "I know."

"Oh, damn," she said. "Mrs. Hansen is here with those pills again. You always seem to be calling at the wrong time, Irish."

"You just be a good girl, and I'll see you tomorrow."

"Hurry, Irish," she whispered. "I miss you so much."

He called Maude and told her that he would pick her and the little girl up at noon the next day.

Next he called Bea to see if she had heard from Mike. "I'm glad you called, Dude; I've been trying to reach you

all afternoon. Can we meet somewhere?" she asked, sounding a bit frightened.

Dude frowned. "How about dinner?"

"All right," she said. "I'm dressed now so I can meet you anytime you say."

"How about Grover's in half an hour? I'll be at the bar."

"See you then."

Dude paid his bill and walked out. It was getting dark: he hesitated at the corner of Clark and Randolph trying to pick out the night crew assigned to follow him. He couldn't, so he walked to his Packard and was surprised to find a parking ticket on the windshield. Must be a new man on the beat, he thought, everyone else knew his car.

It wasn't until he was a block away from the supper club that he saw the tail. It was too dark to see what make the car was, but when he pulled his car up in front of the restaurant the tail cruised by slowly and he got a good look. It was another black Ford sedan, but didn't look to be a county car. He didn't recognize either of the occupants. When the car was abreast of him he caught the eye of the man sitting on the passenger side, and he leaned out of his car window to call out, smiling, "If it's okay with Brannigan I'll buy you guys dinner."

They were going slowly enough so that they heard him. The driver stepped on the gas and sped off down the block. Dude laughed and headed for the door of the restaurant, leaving the Packard for the doorman to park.

The bartender recognized him from the night before, and, probably remembering that Dude had stiffed him, deliberately waited on two other people. Dude folded up a five dollar bill and pushed it across the bar when the bartender finally got around to him. "Sorry about last night, pal, I think I had a wee bit too much."

The man pocketed the bill and said, "No, sir, you conducted yourself like a gentleman." Then he asked, "You're Dude Brennan, aren't you?"

Dude grinned. "The same."

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Brennan. I'm Phil," he said, extending his hand to the committeeman.

"Same here, Phil, now how about a double martini on the rocks?" When the drink was served, Dude asked, "Has Kolb been here yet tonight?"

"Not yet. He doesn't usually get here before seven."

Bea walked up a moment later, and sat down next to Dude. "I'll have the same thing you are having, but make mine a single," she said.

"How is your cold?" he asked.

"I think I'm over it now."

"I don't know what the hell has been getting into Mike these days," Dude said. "This morning he parked the car out in front of the office and left the keys with Larry at the diner, and told him that I would understand. I guess that means he quit. I don't know. I haven't been able to get him on the phone."

Bea began stirring the ice in her drink nervously and once or twice started to say something but stopped. Finally she turned to him and said, "Can we get a booth in the dining room, Dude? It's too crowded here."

Dude signaled Phil and asked if he had enough influence to get a quiet booth for them. The bartender left his station and in a minute was back with the headwaiter who escorted them to a quiet booth in a back corner of the dining room. When they were seated, Dude asked, "What happened, Princess? You don't get this upset unless something is wrong. Tell me."

"First, Dude," she began, "I want you to promise me that you won't do anything."

"How the hell can I do that when I don't even know what's going on?" he asked, exasperated.

"Promise, Dude?" she persisted.

"Okay, okay, I promise, now get on with it," he said reluctantly.

"What time did Mike bring your car around this morning?"

"I don't know," he said. "It had to be around seven or eight o'clock I guess. Why?"

"Well, he must have started drinking about then," she said, "because when he came over to my apartment a little after noon he was pretty drunk. He said that he had quit and that he wanted to talk to me. I thought I would give him some coffee and try to sober him up. While I was fixing the coffee he talked real wild. He said that you and Lynn Sullivan were no good and called you all sorts of names. He had seen Kolb's column. I tried to tell him that no one believed what Kolb wrote and that I knew Lynn and she wouldn't have done anything like that, but he wouldn't listen.

"Then he said that he was the only person who could ruin you and that he was going to the attorney general and tell him all about you and your connections with Conforti. He said he was going to tell that he was with you and saw Boyd Teichner give you one hundred thousand dollars to give to Ward Donohue to get the subway contracts."

She stopped talking when a waiter came to the booth to see if they were ready to order.

"Not yet. Bring us another round of drinks instead." Dude said. Then he asked Bea. "You don't believe that rot in Kolb's column, do you?"

She looked at him for a long moment. "I don't want to, Dude." She believes it, he thought, and decided it would be best to drop the subject, so he asked, "What else happened?"

She took a sip of the martini then continued. "When he finished his tirade against you and Lynn, he told me that he was in love with me, that he had always been. Then he began pawing at me."

She had to pause while the waiter served the drinks. Dude was grimly silent, cracking his knuckles. She touched his arm and said, "Dude, you promised."

He said through clenched teeth. "Go on, and don't leave anything out."

"You know how strong he is. He pulled me down on the couch and—"

"Did he rape you?" Dude asked viciously, his face almost turning purple with rage.

"He . . . tried to," she said, tears welled up in her eyes.

"Goddamn him!" he said, so loudly that the couple seated at the table opposite them looked up, startled.

He took her hand in his until she regained her composure, and she continued haltingly. "He . . . he tore my dress and . . . and when I started to cry I guess he realized what he was doing because he got up and ran out."

"Has he tried to contact you since then, Princess?" he asked quietly.

"No," she said in a frightened voice. "My God, Dude! You don't think he will come back, do you?"

"I don't think so. He might try to call to tell you he's sorry, though."

"Oh, I hope not. I'm afraid of him Dude, really afraid."

"Don't worry, Princess," he said, "I'm going to tell Frank to have his men keep an eye on you for the next few days."

"Then you do think he will try something again, don't you?" she asked, now very frightened.

"No, sweetheart, if I thought anything like that I would have you file charges against him for attempted rape," he said sternly.

It took nearly fifteen minutes to convince her that she should have something to eat. He was sure she hadn't eaten all day. After they ordered, he excused himself and went to phone Frank Quinncannon. He told the detective what had happened and gave him Bea's address. Frank said that he would see that someone would be watching the apartment, and suggested he tell Bea not to get scared if she saw a couple of strangers in a car hanging around the neighborhood.

When Dude returned, Kolb was standing at the table, talking to Bea.

"What's your problem, pig?" he asked the columnist as he slid into the booth beside his secretary.

"I don't know how you did it, Brennan," Kolb said nastily. "I have to congratulate you. You did a good job. I'm black-balled from every paper in town!"

Dude shrugged. "I wasn't aware that you had lost your

slimy job, but if you did you did it all by yourself with your garbage mouth. Now if that's all you came here to say, shove off!"

The thick-lipped smile was on Kolb's face when he said, "You are going to regret what you've done, you goddamn two-bit ward heeler. I'm going to—"

He never finished the sentence. In one swift motion Dude was out of the booth, his left hand smashing into Kolb's mouth, spraying him with bits of broken teeth and blood. When he fell backwards, Dude sank his right fist into Kolb's huge stomach: the man doubled over, and crumpled into a heap at his feet.

Bea sat there wide-eyed and pale.

Dude realized that Kolb had not given him real provocation for his explosion. It was the anger boiling up in him for what Mike had tried to do to Bea. That had triggered him. He took a fifty dollar bill from his wallet, tossed it on the table, then taking Bea by the hand, said, "Come on, Princess, I think we better get out of here."

Two waiters were helping Kolb to his feet as Dude hurried Bea out of the restaurant.

While they were waiting for his car to be brought around, Dude started to laugh. Bea was puzzled. "Just what is so funny?"

"I was just thinking," he said, still laughing, "last night I stiffed the bartender, Phil, and tonight I not only stiffed him again, but I left without paying the tab."

Bea was angry. "You knew Kolb would be here tonight, didn't you? And you knew he had been fired."

"Yep," he said, grinning.

"You could have had the decency to have settled your differences some other time, when I wasn't along!"

"I might not have had another chance for weeks," he said mildly. "Besides, I might have forgotten all about it by the time I saw him again."

He drove to the Hotel Richmond-Carlton where there was a rooftop night club and they had a quiet candlelit supper. When they were relaxing over brandy, Dude smiled at Bea. "Are you feeling any better, Princess?"

She sighed, held up a cigarette for him to light, and said, "I guess so, but I'm still afraid. Mike might come back again tonight."

He thought for a moment, then said, "I'm going to get you a room here for the night so you can get some sleep."

She smiled at him and said, "You don't have to do that, Dude. I'll be all right."

"You'll stay here tonight," he said. "That's that."

He took her down to the front desk and had her register. When the desk clerk found out she had no luggage, he winked knowingly at Dude. The committeeman didn't care for the thoughts on the desk clerk's mind and was entertaining the notion of belting him too, but decided he probably wouldn't be able to do as good a job on him as he had on Kolb because the knuckles of his left hand were beginning to swell and become painful. Instead, he flashed the Chicago Police Department silver star that most aldermen and committeemen were allowed to carry along with a police identification card, and then told the clerk roughly, "I want your house detective to station himself outside Miss Hoke's room all night and see that no one bothers her."

"I understand, Officer," the clerk said. "We'll see that she is not disturbed."

He went up to the room with Bea and, after he was certain that she would be all right, handed her some money and said, "If I'm not able to get here in the morning to pick you up, I want you to use this and take a cab back to your place."

She said in almost a whisper, "Thanks Dude . . . for everything." Then she added, barely audibly, "Do you want to stay with me?"

He winked at her and said, "I don't think that would be wise, Princess, that desk clerk already has some strange ideas." Then he kissed her lightly and left.

It was still early and he didn't feel like returning to his apartment, so he decided he would aggravate Brannigan's men. He rode around the city for an hour or so, his two watchdogs always in sight in his rear-view mirror, then

raced the Packard out to Cicero, hitting speeds of almost eighty miles an hour.

Just inside the Cicero city limits, Dude pulled up to a pay telephone next to a fish market and called the Cicero Police Department.

"Cicero Police," the desk sergeant said.

"This is Patrick Brennan, sir. I am being followed by two men in a black Ford sedan, license number 114-4026, and I think they are gangsters. I am going to drive by the station in two or three minutes, I'll be in a black Packard touring car. Can you stop them and find out what they want?"

"Yes, Mr. Brennan," the sergeant said. "When you drive by, blink your headlights one time so we will know who you are."

"Thank you, Officer," Dude said and hung up.

The tail was directly behind him when he drove past the police station. He blinked the lights of the Packard once, and out of nowhere three squad cars converged on the Ford and pinned it to the curb.

He sped back to Chicago, laughing. He wondered how the two investigators were going to explain losing him to Brannigan.

BOOK TWO

PENANCE AND CONTRITION

Chapter 11

Jack Sullivan's head was at an odd angle. The bulging eyes stared vacantly, and there was a kind of half smile on the distorted mouth with the black protruding tongue. He was walking toward Dude, bobbing up and down like a marionette, and the rope around his neck was taut, running straight up into nothingness. He was carrying a gigantic hypodermic needle which he kept jabbing at Dude, backing him closer and closer to the edge of the cliff. Dude could feel his heart pounding furiously and he knew that if he took one more step backward he would fall into that bottomless pit forever.

Somewhere a telephone was ringing and Dude looked around frantically, knowing that if he could just find it then he would be safe.

He was soaked with cold sweat when the ringing phone finally brought him out of the nightmare. When he picked up the receiver, his voice was hoarse and his heart was still beating rapidly.

"Mr. Brennan? This is Sergeant Marquardt at the Monroe Street Station. We have your chauffeur Michael Rior-dan down here in the lock-up."

Dude looked at his watch. It was a quarter of five. "What is he charged with, Sergeant?"

"One moment, sir, I'll get his arrest sheet."

Dude sat down on the sofa and lit a cigarette, his hands still shaking from the effects of the dream.

"I have it now, Mr. Brennan," the sergeant said. "Drunk and disorderly; damaging city property; two counts of ag-

gravated assault; six counts of assaulting a police officer; resisting arrest; and one count of assault with the intent to commit murder. That about covers it, sir."

Dude whistled and said, "My God, what the hell happened?"

"He went into the Crossroads Bar at Twelfth and Blue Island and picked a fight. He cleaned up on two of the patrons, putting both of them in the hospital. Next he proceeded to strangle the bartender and probably would have killed him except the area car arrived about that time. He knocked several teeth out of one of the arresting officers and tore a spotlight off a squad car." It took six officers to finally subdue him.

"Did he ask you to call me, Sergeant?" Dude asked.

"No, sir. We knew that he was your chauffeur and I took it on myself to call you."

Dude thought for a moment, then asked, "What kind of shape is he in now?"

"I looked in on him a little while ago and he was sleeping. We've had him here almost four hours so he ought to be fairly well sobered up by now," he said.

Dude debated whether or not to go down and bail him out. He decided that he should at least talk to Mike. "I'll be over there in about a half an hour," he told the desk sergeant.

He showered, shaved, and pulled out a dark-gray suit, resigned to the fact that he would be up for the rest of the day. Not that he was particularly anxious to go back to sleep, possibly to resume his nightmare.

It was nearly six when he entered the police station. He went to the desk. "Are you Sergeant Marquardt?"

"Yes, sir. And you are Mr. Brennan?"

"The same."

"If you will wait a moment, sir, I'll have one of the officers take you back so you can talk to him," the sergeant said.

"Thank you, Sergeant."

Sergeant Marquardt stepped into an office and in a few moments came out with a heavyset ruddy-faced officer who had removed his uniform coat and had his shirt sleeves rolled up.

"This is Officer Forney, Mr. Brennan, he was one of the arresting officers."

Dude nodded and shook hands with Forney.

As they walked back to the lock-up the policeman said, "I'm a pretty big guy, Mr. Brennan, but I'll tell you one thing, it's been a long time since I tangled with anyone the likes of Riordan."

"Yeah," Dude said, "I guess he can get pretty mean when he's been drinking."

"Was he ever a pro, Mr. Brennan?" Forney asked.

"For almost twelve years."

"I thought so!" the officer nodded. "I don't think he's been charged with assault with a deadly weapon, although he could be."

"No," Dude said, "I've already seen the charges they have filed against him."

They had Mike in the drunk tank, a large foul-smelling cell. There were two long wooden benches, one on either side. In the center, attached to the rear wall was a single commode on which a disheveled man sat, sleeping.

There were approximately forty men in the cell. The benches were filled and the remaining men were sprawled on the concrete floor.

Most of the cell's inhabitants were derelicts, gathered up the previous evening from the sidewalks and doorways of West Madison Street and Halstead Street. None were strangers to the place save Mike. Mike was awake and sitting on the floor next to the cell door.

Officer Forney nodded to Dude and said, "Stay as long as you like, Mr. Brennan. You can find your way back out, can't you?"

"Yes, and thank you," Dude said.

Mike looked up at his former boss out of bloodshot eyes and asked sullenly, "What the hell do you want, bastard?"

The big man must have given the police a bad time,

Dude thought, judging from his appearance. His clothes were filthy and his suit jacket was torn in several places. There were spots of blood on his coat collar and the front of his shirt. Somewhere he had lost his tie. The blood apparently came from the long gash over his right eye, which was now caked with dried blood.

"I thought you might want to tell me what happened yesterday," Dude said indifferently.

Mike turned his head away and said nothing.

"Bea is nearly out of her mind, frightened that you are going to come back and try to rape her again," the committeeman said quietly.

"Tell her I'm sorry," Mike said, then added, "I really wasn't going to rape her."

"She thought so. She didn't think you were playing games when you ripped her dress off," Dude said angrily as he thought of his secretary, and the story she had related to him.

"That was an accident," his chauffeur said defensively.

"Well, whatever. Do you want me to go your bail for you?" he asked, although he knew what the answer would be.

"No," Mike said, then spat between his legs.

"I take it you don't want to work for me any longer," Dude said.

"Not on your life!" Mike said. "I'm going to fix you good, Dude, and I'm just the guy that can do it."

"Bea said that you told her something like that yesterday," Dude then warned. "I don't think you're stupid enough to start something you undoubtedly would regret later, Mike. Nobody is ever going to break me."

"I wouldn't bet on that," Mike sneered.

Two officers were coming down the corridor pushing a cart filled with baloney sandwiches and black coffee for the inmates. Dude decided that further conversation with Mike would probably end in name calling, so he left.

He stopped by the desk, thanked the sergeant, and asked what time "holiday court" would start. He was told

that court convened at eight o'clock and that Judge John Geocariss would be presiding.

Dude drove over to Twelfth Street, picked up a paper and then looked for a restaurant open that early on a Sunday morning. When he finally found one, he parked the Packard. The car with Brannigan's men pulled in behind him. It was the green Buick, so Dude assumed that Al Moran and his partner were assigned to him today.

Dude ordered ham and eggs and began reading the paper. He was on his second cup of coffee when he turned to the editorial page.

He was dumfounded when he read the lead editorial. Meeker must have written it himself, taking the cue from Whalen, he thought.

A RETRACTION IS IN ORDER

When an error is committed, or an unjust story is printed by a newspaper, it becomes the responsibility and duty of the editor of that newspaper to correct the mistake.

Unfortunately, retractions seldom appear on an editorial page. They are usually to be found in inconspicuous places in the paper, leading the readers to believe that the editor is embarrassed to admit his error.

The readers are right.

The editor of the *Examiner* wishes to extend his apologies to Mrs. Lynn Sullivan and Mr. Patrick M. Brennan for having their names maligned in a distorted item written by the former columnist Burtram Kolb in Saturday's edition of this newspaper.

Mr. Kolb's column has been discontinued because the *Examiner* feels that such columns survive mostly on rumor and innuendo and sharply conflict with the paper's policy of factual news reporting.

The editor sincerely hopes that the apology will be accepted by Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Brennan.

Dude carefully tore the article from the paper and placed it in his inside coat pocket.

Court had been in session about ten minutes when Dude returned to the station and hurried up to the second floor. Judge Geocaris had known Dude for several years and nodded to him as Dude took a seat in the front row of the small courtroom.

The standard practice in Bum's Court, as it was called, was to hear the drunk and disorderly cases first in groups of fifteen at a time. The defendants would be ushered in, the city attorney would read the charge, and ask them how they pleaded. All would say "guilty," then the judge would say, "There will be a finding of guilty on the plea of guilty to the charges." Then, usually without prompting, all would hold out both arms, palms up, so that the judge could see if anyone had the shakes. If someone did, the judge would have him step aside, and refer him to one of the mission organizations for a warm meal and a clean bed. The others were set free.

After all the drunk and disorderly cases had been heard, the city attorney stepped aside and the state's attorney took over for the more serious cases.

Mike was the first to be brought in, and Judge Geocaris looked questioningly at Dude to see if he was going to intercede for his friend. Dude shook his head, indicating to the jurist that he wanted Mike buried.

The hearing was not a formal arraignment, but was just for the purpose of setting bail. Mike stood quietly while the state's attorney read the charges and recommended that bail be set at ten thousand dollars. Dude could see Mike flinch when the judge ignored the state's recommendations and set bail at fifty thousand dollars, and, as the bailiff was leading him out of the courtroom, he shot Dude a look of pure hatred.

Although Mike was paid a handsome salary as the committeeman's personal chauffeur and bodyguard, Dude doubted seriously that he had saved any money over the

years. In a way, Mike was like an overgrown kid, and Dude knew he spent his salary as fast as he got it on poker and the horses. He didn't think Mike could come up with the ten percent required to pay a professional bondsman to free him, and he knew Mike would not trade on Dude's name to influence a bondsman to have him released on a promise that he'd be reimbursed at some future date.

Dude stepped into one of a row of telephone booths in the main lobby of the police station and called the Richmond-Carlton Hotel.

"Good morning, Princess," he said, "did I wake you up?"

"Not really." He could hear her yawn. "I was just lying here trying to decide whether or not I should be getting up."

"How about breakfast with me?" he asked. He knew she was stretching and his imagination started painting sensual pictures in his mind. "I'll be waiting in the dining room for you in about forty-five minutes," he said, suppressing a desire to suggest they breakfast in her room.

"I'll be there," she said softly and hung up.

Outside, on the steps of the police-station courthouse, Dude bumped into Saul Klein, one of the more respected bondsmen in the city.

"Hi, Saul," Dude said, smiling and shaking hands cordially.

The bondsman asked, "What are you doing around here on a Sunday morning?"

"Mike quit me, then went on a binge and tried to rape my secretary. When he failed he got drunker and tore up a bar over on Blue Island Avenue, putting a couple of guys in the hospital, then took on the whole police department. Johnnie Geocaris just slapped a fifty-thousand-dollar bond on him."

"Jeez, he must have really tied one on. Do you want me to get him out, Dude?"

"Definitely not, Saul," Dude said. "And I'd appreciate it if you would pass the word along to the other bondsmen to let him rot. He may try to use my name and our

former relationship to influence one of the other fellows because I don't think he has the cash to get out."

"Will do," the bondsman said, starting to leave. "Nice seeing you again, Dude."

Dude waved and headed for the Packard.

Being typically female, Bea was late. When Dude arrived at the hotel dining room to meet her, he ordered coffee. By the time he was served, she joined him.

He told her what had happened about Mike. "And he won't be arraigned until the twentieth, and between now and then I doubt that anyone will be going his bond."

"That's a relief!" Bea said.

Then Dude handed the newspaper clipping to her. When she finished reading it, she laughed. "I'm glad, Dude. But now it seems you hit Kolb for nothing last night."

"Not for nothing, Princess," he said, "that sonofabitch had that coming for a long time."

After breakfast, Dude went to the hotel desk and paid the bill. He got an envelope and a stamp from the clerk and mailed the editorial to Lynn Sullivan in Miami, saying to Bea, "This should help in case any of the children stumbled onto Kolb's original blast."

It was close to noon when Dude dropped Bea off at her apartment. Then he headed for the Lake Shore Drive apartment, wishing fervently that he could shake the tail. He didn't relish the idea that Brannigan would find out about Jackie and Kimmie.

Twice he tried unsuccessfully to lose the Buick in the light Sunday morning traffic.

The little girl was dressed in a white ruffled dress and Maude was brushing her long black hair when Dude let himself into the apartment. Kimmie rushed to his outstretched arms, squealing, "Dudel!"

He picked her up and hoisted her up into the air. "Hi, pumpkin! Ready to go for a ride?"

"Yes," she said excitedly, "we're going to see Mommy!"

"You bet we are," he said. He smiled fondly at her, and at Maude. "Are you all set?"

As they drove, Dude kept an eye on the Buick through his rear-view mirror. When he crossed the city limits and entered the suburbs he noticed the following car turn off and head back. He wondered why. Could the detectives have received instructions to call off the surveillance? Whatever the reason, Dude was glad that Brannigan's men would not find out where he was going and who he was visiting.

Jackie was outside, on the patio in one of the garden chairs. She was a woman: when he saw her, Dude drew his breath in sharply. It seemed that he always failed to remember just how beautiful she was! When she saw them and smiled, Dude could feel his heart began to pound.

Kimmie raced ahead and fairly jumped into her mother's arms. It took several minutes before Jackie could acknowledge the presence of her other two guests. She kissed Maude, then, looking up at Dude with her soft brown doe eyes, said, "Hi, Irish."

He didn't reply, just took her face between his hands and kissed her long and tenderly. When they parted, he said, "Hi, love."

They all pulled up chairs and sat in the sun together. She and Maude gossiped for a long time, and all the while she held tightly to Dude's hand. They talked for what seemed hours. He explained about the Brannigan affair, the deal with Morrissey, his getting the nod to run for mayor, and finally about Mike, leaving out his attempt to rape Bea.

He could see by the expression on her face that she was proud of him, and that she really loved him, and he was happy.

When it came time to go, little Kimmie rebelled, wanting to stay with her mother. She was on the verge of a tantrum when Jackie told her sternly that if she were going to behave that way she would forbid her to come out the following Sunday. That worked, and after tearful farewells they departed.

Dude had four telephone messages, all of them from Al Moran. The fourth was received less than an hour before the committeeman had returned and the only one with a phone number.

From his apartment Dude called the number. A young girl answered the telephone, and he could hear her call out: "Daddy? Telephone." When Moran was on the line, Dude asked, "Hello, Al, what's up?"

"Plenty, pal, plenty," he said gravely. "Did you notice this afternoon when we quit following you?"

"Yeah," Dude said. "I figured they called you on the radio and told you not to bother tailing me any more."

"That's just what did happen," Moran said. "When we got back to Twenty-sixth Street to make out our report the joint was jumping. I figured something big was up because both Brannigan and Powell were there. They had someone in Brannigan's private office and judging from the way everyone was hopping around and grinning from ear to ear, plus the fact that we were ordered off the tail, it could only mean that whatever it was it had to do with you.

"As we were finishing our report, three of the secretaries showed up along with a court reporter. I grabbed Powell and asked him what was going on. Well, Powell is such a goddamn blabbermouth he couldn't resist telling me, although I imagine Brannigan must have told him that the whole thing was secret and to keep his trap shut."

Moran paused to catch his breath and Dude broke in, "For Christ's sake, Al, will you get to the point?"

The detective said, "Here it is. It was Iron Mike they had in the office. He contacted Brannigan when he was transferred from Monroe Street out to the county jail. Brannigan got hold of Judge Pope and had the fifty grand bail set aside and released Mike on his own recognizance. Mike talked for at least three hours, and everything was taken down by the court reporter.

"Brannigan is setting up a special hearing before the grand jury, and is going to try to get indictments against you, Teichner, Whalen, Gorman, and Ward Donohue. He

also thinks he has enough to have you indicted for taking money from Conforti. When I left they were making out subpoenas like they were going out of style. I think you better make yourself scarce for the next few days, Dude, in case they get a warrant out for you and the others."

Dude felt as though his heart were caught in his throat, and his hands were trembling. "Thanks, Al," he said hoarsely, "I won't forget this, partner."

"Forget it, Dude," the detective said. "I owe you a lot, and I'm just glad I was around when it happened."

Dude mumbled his thanks again and hung up the receiver. He reluctantly put in a call to Conforti and reached him as he was leaving the Forest Park restaurant for the night. "Tony? I've got to see you right away. We are in trouble, big trouble and I mean big," Dude said shakily.

"Mr. Brennan," the smooth voice of the syndicate chief came over the phone, "you sound frightened, and that is not at all like you."

Before the Sicilian could say more, Dude blurted out the whole story about Mike and even told him of the unsuccessful rape attempt.

"Listen, Dude," Conforti said, and it was the first time since he had known the gangster that he called him by his nickname. "You offered a suggestion that we should not be in contact until the election is over. That is an excellent idea. By the way, for the time being I have decided that we should hold off on assisting my young friend. It would be foolish to place his career in jeopardy with a possible upheaval in Mr. Brannigan's office. This concludes our contact until November fourth. I shall not be available to you until then."

The phone went dead in Dude's ear. He didn't quite grasp the implications of their conversation, and could not understand why Conforti refused to comment on what was happening.

He called Bea and told her that Mike was on the loose again, and explained what Moran had told him and suggested that she check into the Richmond-Carlton again, not only to be safe from Mike, but to avoid possible ser-

vice of a grand jury subpoena. She readily agreed and hung up.

He hurriedly threw some clothes into a suitcase, had Max call a taxi for him, and checked into the Lake Shore Towers Hotel on Michigan Boulevard under an assumed name. The move was fast: it was less than an hour since he had spoken to Moran.

Michael Francis Riordan was a born loser.

Raised in the tough Lawndale district on Chicago's West Side, young Michael earned the nickname "Iron Mike" because of his deadly use of his huge fists. When his father was shot to death running whiskey in from Canada, Mike left home and began drifting around the country, working at whatever odd jobs came his way. Working as a freight handler in Kansas City, Missouri, young Mike was spotted by Gino "The Promoter" Segretti, a small-time fight promoter. He was awed by the huge man and by the ease and grace of his movements. It didn't take long to talk Iron Mike into accepting Segretti's offer to become a professional fighter. The first few years of fighting in smokers and tank towns throughout the Midwest looked promising to both Mike and his handlers. The big time was quite another proposition. Within a year all the important contenders had learned the big man's weakness. He telegraphed both his right-cross and his uppercut. Segretti could not break Mike of his shortcomings and, rather than turn his man over to another trainer, began setting up fights in various arenas and placing large bets against him.

Unaware of what was happening, Mike just fought all the harder but came away from each battle broken a little more both in spirit and body.

His last fight, in the old Chicago Gardens Arena, was a blood-filled nightmare. His nose had been broken since the end of the fourth round and by the eighth round both of his eyes were closed. The first minute of the ninth round found Mike two thirds unconscious, totally unaware of where he was and bleeding profusely from the cuts over both his eyes.

His opponent was not a cruel man and wanted desperately to end the slaughter. He knew the only way he could mercifully stop the fight would be to knock Mike out. But try as he did, the hulking man would not go down.

When the bell sounded the end of the round, Mike was in the neutral corner against the ropes, his arms limp at his sides, and his head snapping back and forth from the rapid blows pounding against his face and head.

As his handlers worked feverishly to close the cuts over Mike's eyes, Segretti poured ice water over Mike's head and slapped his face several times in an effort to revive him.

"Are you awake, Mike? Where are you, Mike? Come on, boy!" Segretti hollered at him.

"Yeah! I'm here, I'm here!" Mike answered groggily.

"Where?" Segretti asked.

"I dunno," Mike said helplessly.

The referee came over to Mike's corner and said to Segretti, "You wanna t'row in da towel, Segretti?"

"Naw!" Segretti said. "We're coming out for the tenth."

They hauled Mike to his feet and pushed him toward the center of the ring when the timer hit the bell for the beginning of the tenth round. His opponent again steered him to a corner and renewed the assault. Mike's arms felt like lead and he dropped them wearily to his sides. He no longer felt pain. He was dimly aware of lights flashing off and on and hazily wondered where they were coming from. Ten seconds before the round ended, his opponent gathered all his strength and smashed his fist against the point of Mike's jaw.

The lights finally went out and stayed out.

Mike awoke three days later in County Hospital, suffering from a severe concussion, a fractured jaw, a broken nose and right cheekbone, and the end of twelve years of trying to be somebody.

With no formal education, and only his size and strength to rely on, Mike was forced into low-paying jobs as a laborer, until he was offered a job working in an automotive shop where he learned to be an excellent mechanic.

At that time Dude was assistant to the late Big Tim Hanrahan, and had not yet been elected committeeman of the politically powerful Fourth Ward Regular Democratic Organization. The alderman's Cadillac developed engine trouble and Dude took it to the shop where Mike was working. He liked the huge ex-boxer, and in a short time they became fast friends.

When the alderman needed a full-time chauffeur, Dude went to Mike. Luckily, Mike was living in the ward at the time so sponsorship presented no problem. The salary was good, and later, when the crash came in twenty-nine, Mike was thankful that he had the job.

When the Cook County Democratic Central Committee gave Dude the nod to run for committeeman because of Big Tim's failing health, Mike automatically became his wheelman and confidant. His loyalty to the new committeeman was legend throughout the ward.

A lonely man, who had lived in hotels and furnished rooms most of his adult life, Mike's only contact with women was an occasional trip to one of the numerous brothels in the city.

Bea, Big Tim's niece, had come to work shortly before the alderman's death. When Mike first saw her he fell in love immediately and was miserable. Over the years he watched helplessly as Bea fell in love with Dude and made no attempt to hide her feelings. At times he hated Dude for ignoring the overtures Bea made to him. But eventually Mike resigned himself. He decided that as far as love and marriage were concerned, whatever chances he might have had in his youth had faded during his years in the prize ring.

Mike never criticized Dude's actions. He had been with him and watched him take payoff money from Conforti and various businessmen over the years but said nothing. Dude could not have attained his position and stature as the most powerful clout in the city were it not for those deals. Like Whalen, Dude made a lot of money through deals, but unlike Whalen, Dude made direct payoffs and took direct payoffs. Whalen was smarter. Nothing could be

traced to the mayor himself, but it could be to Dude. And the link was Mike.

Animosity for his employer began when Dude met and began courting Jacqueline Devereaux.

Kolb's public tattletaling on Dude and Lynn was the last straw for Mike. He could no longer stand by and watch Bea have her heart broken by his boss.

He only vaguely remembered going to Bea's apartment and trying to make love to her. He remembered drinking the rest of that day, but couldn't recall what had led up to the fight in the Crossroads bar.

When he called Brannigan, that broke all of his ties with Dude for good. He told the state's attorney everything. He supplied Brannigan with enough damning evidence to have Dude indicted and he was not sorry. When Mike was released, Brannigan assigned two men to guard him until he could testify on Monday morning before the grand jury, after Mike refused an offer by the state's attorney to be held in protective custody until the hearing.

The detectives delivered Mike to his apartment, and after he assured them that he would be staying in for the rest of the night, they settled down in the cramped police car in front of Mike's apartment building to read the Sunday papers.

At nine o'clock Cowboy and Sonny were parked in the alley behind Mike's apartment house in a stolen Chevrolet.

Sonny looked at his watch nervously, waiting for Sal Morretti to carry out his part of the plan. The two detectives had finished reading the papers and were playing a round of two-handed pinochle when it happened. Morretti, another murderer from Detroit, from time to time helped out in his uncle's wholesale vegetable business. On this night he had borrowed his uncle's truck to set up the kidnapping of Iron Mike.

At nine, Morretti looked at his watch, then took a flask of whiskey from his hip pocket, swallowed half of its contents, then put the truck into gear. He was doing nearly forty miles an hour when he turned east on Adams, almost tipping the truck over. When he was a quarter of the way

down the block he purposely side-swiped two parked cars, and when he was almost abreast of the squad car he pulled the steering wheel sharply to the right and crashed into it.

When the two men in the alley heard the crash, they jumped out of their car and raced up the back stairway of the building to the second floor. Cowboy took a long thin ice-pick-like instrument from his breast pocket and inserted it into the lock on Mike's door.

Mike was sound asleep when the two killers rushed into the room, each brandishing a .45 Colt automatic. He woke fast. They ordered him to put on his pants and shoes and then Sonny pulled out a pair of police handcuffs and cuffed Mike's hands behind his back while Cowboy stuffed a gag in the huge man's mouth.

Mike offered no resistance.

The syndicate men shoved Mike roughly ahead of them, out of the apartment, and down to the waiting car and sped off.

They drove to an abandoned meat-packing warehouse on the corner of Leavitt and Lake Streets. Sonny pulled the car up to the rear entrance and waited until Cowboy opened the doors. He then drove the car into the building and Cowboy closed the doors behind them.

Cowboy held his .45 to Mike's head while Sonny unlocked the handcuffs. They shoved him over to a corner where there was a row of meathooks attached to the wall about six feet up. A dim lightbulb hung directly overhead.

Sonny ordered Mike to hold his arms out while he wired his wrists to the meathooks, then wired his ankles together. Cowboy then placed the palm of Mike's left hand on the tip of one of the meathooks, then with the butt of the .45 smashed it against the back of Mike's hand, pushing the hook all of the way through Mike's open hand. Mike screamed, but it was only a muffled groan through the gag. Cowboy then quickly impaled Mike's right hand on another meathook.

Cowboy disappeared into another part of the building while Sonny removed the gag from Mike's mouth.

"Okay, slob, what did you and the state's attorney talk about?" Sonny asked.

Mike spit in the killer's face and gasped. "Fuck you and if you got any friends, fuck them too!"

Sonny smiled, wiped the spittle from his face, then said, in a friendly tone of voice, "Have it your way. You'll tell us what we want to know all right, and tell us gladly." Then he pulled Mike's pants and shorts down, exposing his nakedness.

Cowboy came out of the darkness carrying a blowtorch. As he put a match to the torch and adjusted the flame, Sonny said, "Dummy here says we should go screw ourselves, isn't that a wicked thing to say?"

Cowboy ignored his partner's remark and slowly walked up to Mike. He held the blowtorch to the ex-fighter's genitals for one or two seconds then stepped back.

The agonized scream reverberated eerily through the empty warehouse.

Mike lost consciousness for several moments and when he opened his eyes, Sonny asked for the second time, "What did you and Brannigan talk about?"

"Nuthin'," Mike croaked, barely getting the word out, praying the pain would ease up. Cowboy was not satisfied with the answer and this time held the blowtorch to Mike's right armpit.

The pain was so severe that Mike was unable to scream. His face was contorted and he knew that he would not be able to hold out much longer.

Cowboy did not wait for Sonny to ask another question. He just went ahead and seared the left armpit, evoking another pitiful cry.

Mike started nodding his head up and down, indicating that he was ready to tell his tormentors what they wanted to know.

"Did you say anything about Mr. C.?" Sonny asked.

"Yeah!" Mike gasped. "I . . . I told Brannigan all . . . all about payoffs to . . . to Brennan . . . where the . . . where the joints are . . . the bagmen and . . . the pushers . . ."

"What else?" the smiling Sonny asked.

"Gorman . . . who got . . . who got off . . . how . . . much . . . for . . . for each case. . . ."

"Anything else?" the killer persisted.

"No . . . that's all . . . I swear it," Mike said, and hoped that when they killed him it would be fast.

Sonny turned to his accomplice and, looking at him questioningly asked, "What do you think?"

Cowboy put the torch down, shrugged, and replied, "That's all; he's not holding back." Then he walked over to the trunk of the stolen Chevrolet, removed his jacket, shirt and tie and put on a pair of coveralls.

Sonny sat down on an empty packing case, took out his .45, and flipped off the safety.

Cowboy returned, and without a word walked up to Mike, impaled on the meathooks, and stabbed him methodically in the chest and stomach with a long butcher knife. Mike's blood spurted out, all over Conforti's hired assassin.

When Cowboy stepped back, he was breathing very hard, his eyes were glazed and spittle trickled from the corners of his mouth. He turned to his partner and said, "Finish him."

While Cowboy cleaned the blood from his hands and shoes and was changing back into his street clothes, Sonny pumped two bullets into Mike's head, blowing half his face away.

When the roar of the explosions ceased bouncing back and forth off the walls of the building, the silence was strange and ominous.

The gunmen cut the corpse down and rolled it up in a large section of canvas they had brought with them. It took all the strength of both men to put Mike's large body into the trunk of the Chevrolet.

They left the warehouse and drove to Garfield Park. They had left their own car parked near the lagoon. They locked the stolen car with its grisly contents, got into their own car, and drove to Forest Park to report to Conforti that the job was completed.

Michael Francis Riordan's lonely life was ended.

Chapter 12

When the night crew took over the surveillance of Mike's place they were told about the drunk driver who had smashed into the squad car and all of the trouble the afternoon men had to go through getting a wrecker to tow the two vehicles away, and someone to bring them another car.

The night men took turns napping during the long hours until daylight.

When Mike didn't show up by seven-thirty the next morning, the two detectives went up to the apartment and banged on his door for several minutes. When there was no answer, the larger of the two men kicked the door open and entered the apartment.

They decided that Mike had flown the coop and one of the men called Brannigan at his home and told the state's attorney that they thought their man had a change of heart and decided he didn't want to face a grand jury, after all. But as far as they could determine, he hadn't taken any of his clothes with him.

They asked Brannigan if he wanted them to have an APB broadcast over the police radio and have him picked up.

"No," Brannigan said thoughtfully, "I think that sometime during the night Conforti's men put the snatch on him. Call homicide and have them send some men from latent prints to go over the apartment. They might be able to come up with something. After you get back to the

office notify the day men to return all those grand-jury subpoenas; they won't be any good now."

Brannigan hung up the phone and rejoined his wife for breakfast.

"Trouble, dear?" she asked.

"I'm afraid so, honey," he replied, "I think our whole case against Dude Brennan has collapsed. Our key witness, his chauffeur, has disappeared."

His wife nodded as though she understood, but in reality she understood nothing of her husband's job.

At eight-thirty Brannigan's driver picked him up and they drove to his offices in the criminal court building. When he was at his desk he called Powell in and asked him to get the personnel records of all of his employees. There was a leak in the office and he was determined to plug it up. After going over all his employees' records, he was still in the dark. So, rather than take any chances, he ordered Powell to fire every single person who had been sponsored out of the fourth ward.

"Jesus, Bill, you can't do that. Whalen will hit the ceiling!" Powell said in astonishment.

"It doesn't make any difference any more," the state's attorney said. "He must know by now what we've been up to. Right now he is probably putting the wheels in motion to try and ruin me. We have to come up with something concrete against Brennan. Fast."

Powell agreed, then handed his boss a copy of the report the afternoon-surveillance team had written concerning the accident.

Brannigan read it, handed it back, and said to his aide, "Pick up this guy Morretti. There's more to this than meets the eye. In the meantime run a make on him. He may be wanted somewhere."

In an hour Powell popped his head in his boss's office and asked, "I have the sheet on Morretti, Bill, do you want to see it now or later?"

Brannigan put his pen down and pushed to one side the pad on which he had been writing and said, "What have you got, Warren?"

"Not much," said the chief of the criminal division, easing himself down in the big leather chair opposite Brannigan. He put his glasses on and began reading the report. "Salvatore Carmine Morretti, age thirty. Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. No juvenile arrests. One felony arrest last year for assault with the intent to commit murder. The charge arose out of a quarrel in a Detroit gin mill over someone cheating at poker. Charge reduced to agg assault on a plea of guilty. Sentenced to two years' probation. Came to Chicago eight months ago with permission from the Detroit probation department and is currently reporting to our probation department which is supervising it for Detroit through the Interstate Compact. No known ties with any Detroit or Chicago families. Currently employed by Vincenzo Patania, his uncle, at the Sunny Italy Produce Company in the thirteen hundred block on West Randolph Street as a packer and driver.

"The probation department is pleased with his progress and work record, and up until this incident yesterday they were preparing a rule to show cause to have the probation terminated as satisfactory.

"Just in case, I wired Detroit but they don't have anything current on him." Powell removed his spectacles. "I can't see any connection, Bill. That market is in the same neighborhood where Riordan has his apartment. The truck was half-filled with vegetables, and was making deliveries according to the trip sheet on the clipboard he showed the officers. I think he just stopped somewhere and had a few snorts too many and lost control of the truck. Remember, Bill, he not only hit the squad car but also two private passenger cars. I don't think he would be in on a kidnapping while he was this close to being released from his probation."

"That is precisely the point, Warren," the state's attorney said, narrowing his eyes. "It doesn't make sense. Why would a man who has no history of excessive drinking suddenly decide to get loaded when he is about to have his probation terminated? And why hit the squad car watching the house of a grand-jury witness, causing a tieup of

nearly three hours, then sometime during the night that witness disappears?"

Powell shrugged his shoulders, then said, "What makes you think that it's kidnapping? After all, Riordan has been a close friend of Brennan's for several years. He could just have had a change of mind. Homicide couldn't raise any prints, and they said that there was no evidence that a struggle took place in the apartment."

Brannigan thought for a moment, then said, "I know it's only a hunch, Warren, but I feel that Morretti deliberately planned that accident. We'll take one more stab at it. Get me a rundown on Morretti's uncle. Maybe he is the link we want."

When Powell returned for the second time he was elated. "You were right, Bill. Criminal intelligence had him under surveillance at one time. He has no arrest record, but has been to Conforti's Oak Park home several times, and get this: he and Conforti came from the same town in Sicily."

"Good work!" Brannigan said. "Now I know that was no accident. Get Morretti as soon as you can. Hold him on an open charge and have him transferred to a different police station every four hours so that his lawyers can't get to him until we can get him to talk."

While the two lawmen were discussing his fate, Salvatore Carmine Morretti was already on a train headed for New Orleans.

He would not be heard from again.

From the hotel Dude phoned Teichner and Gorman, alerting them to the possibility of subpoenas or warrants. Donohue was still in Wisconsin and not expected back until the following morning. Whalen had to be told, but that had to wait until morning, when Dude saw him.

Dude seriously doubted that grand-jury subpoenas would be served before Monday. Mike was scheduled as the first witness, and his testimony would probably take at least two days. The rest of the witnesses would not be scheduled much before Wednesday.

He spent a restless, tossing night.

At nine o'clock the next morning, Dude phoned the state's attorney's office and asked for Al Moran. "Dude, here. Can you talk, Al?"

"Yes, but not long."

"Any more dope on those grand-jury subpoenas?"

"Good news! Brannigan had them all recalled. Luckily none had been served: we have the laziest process servers in the country."

"Why were they recalled?"

"Mike disappeared last night. I think he got scared, but Brannigan has an idea there was some funny business involved. Anyway, for the time being you won't have to worry about someone tapping you on the shoulder, handing you a warrant, and carting you off to the pokey."

"Thanks, Al. Try to keep me posted. Leave any messages with Max at my place, because the ward office will probably be empty most of the day. I don't want Bea around while Mike is free, so I'm going to give her a few days off."

"I have to go now, Dude; they're handing out the day's assignments. I'll call you later."

Dude called Bea and told her that under no circumstances was she to leave the hotel until she heard from him again. When she tried to question him, he said that he would explain later. She sounded frightened, and he was sorry, but for now she would have to stay that way.

Then he went by cab directly to City Hall. Whalen's spinsterish temporary secretary recognized the committeeman and told him to go right in, the mayor was expecting him. Dude walked in, and Whalen looked up from the papers on his desk. "Good morning, Dude. I have that dummy stock sale right here for you to sign. It's already been notarized."

The ward leader took a seat opposite His Honor and reached for the papers in Whalen's outstretched hand. He signed four copies of the illegal document and handed them back to the city boss.

"You keep one copy for yourself, Dude," the mayor said, handing him a thick envelope. "These are the stock

certificates. Better get them in your safe-deposit box at your bank."

Dude pocketed the envelope, then asked, "What have you heard since I saw you on Saturday?"

"Very little," Whalen said. "I had Louise tell everyone who called that I was out. The only call I did take was from Emmett Gorman late last night. He was in such a snit though that I couldn't make head or tail out of what he was saying. I ended up telling him to come over to the office today, but so far he hasn't shown up or called."

Then Dude told Whalen about Mike, the whole story from beginning to end, omitting only that his chauffeur was accusing Dude of being bought out by Conforti.

The mayor wasn't in the least upset. "As long as Mike stays away from Twenty-sixth Street I don't think we have anything to worry about." Then he asked, "How much was it again that Teichner gave you to give to Ward?"

"One hundred grand. I kept ten of it for myself," Dude replied.

"Brannigan's whistling in the dark, son," the mayor said. "Even with Mike's testimony there is no corroborating witness, and without at least one, there's no case."

"I wish to hell I knew where Mike was," Dude said worriedly.

"Don't worry about it. The way I see it, he sang to Brannigan when he was mad at you and nursing a whopping hangover. After sleeping on it for a while he probably came to his senses and took off because he didn't really want to testify, after all."

Dude was far from convinced that Mike wouldn't show up again at the state's attorney's office and start babbling, this time to a grand jury. The city leader dismissed the whole subject, preferring to discuss more important matters. He smiled warmly at his protégé and said, "For the past hour I have been sharpening the blade on Mr. Brannigan's guillotine. I talked to Attorney General Krebs at length this morning and convinced him that his office should renew the probe into Brannigan's piggy bank. He's

sending twenty-five men to question the people who supposedly received bonus money. His men are also going to talk to Miss Logan. She's just a kid, and most likely scared to death by now and will tell Krebs's people everything." The mayor grinned. "After that I had all of what I just told you leaked to the press. So now we just sit back and watch our state's attorney sink slowly into the quicksand."

"Are you going to make any statement to the newspapers?" Dude asked.

"Not yet. I'll let Krebs get in the first lick. He's already told me that if and when he has a formal statement he's going to say that I insisted that he give Brannigan's office a thorough going over, that I was still convinced there was corruption there. Pretty damn white of him, considering that he's a Republican," Whalen said, smiling, so that he looked to Dude like a fat Chinese Buddha.

Dude rose.

"I'll get these things into the bank. Talk to you later, Jim."

The mayor nodded, and returned to the papers on his desk.

Dude walked to LaSalle Street and entered the Merchants City Bank and Trust Company where he had his safe-deposit box. From the stack of bills in the box he took twelve hundred dollars in cash. Then he put in the stock certificates and bill of sale, and returned the box to the bank guard to have it locked up again.

Outside, he took a cab to a travel agency on Wabash Avenue near Jackson Boulevard.

The girl at the counter was a pert redhead about twenty-two years old. She was slim but had enormous, firm, perfectly formed breasts. The top three buttons of her blouse were unbuttoned, making it possible for anyone to inspect her glands without straining their eyes. Dude found it difficult to keep his eyes on her face and began wondering if he were some kind of a sex fiend, the way he had been acting lately every time he was around a female. He took one more look at the open

blouse, then asked, "What flights are scheduled for Miami today?"

The young clerk tucked her blouse into the waist of her skirt, further accentuating her endowments, gazed boldly at him and said, "Just a moment, sir." She walked to the rear of the office, with Dude watching her every movement, and returned with a thick paperbound volume, plopped it down on the counter in front of her and began leafing through it. Dude's eyes returned to the blouse.

When she located the page she wanted, she checked two of the entries. In a sexy voice that he decided she was obviously affecting for his benefit, she said, "There are two flights to Miami today, sir." She caught him looking down her blouse, and smiled provocatively. "The first is Continental Atlantic Airways flight number seventeen, leaving Midway Airport at one-ten this afternoon, arriving in Miami at six-thirty-five this evening; stopping at Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Palm Beach, and Miami." She looked up quickly to see if she could catch him peeking. She didn't.

"What is the other one, sugar?" he inquired in his deepest, huskiest voice.

This time she slowly licked her lips before answering. "The other is Trans-American Airways flight twenty, leaving Midway Airport at five-forty this afternoon, arriving in Miami at ten-fifteen with intermediary stops at Louisville, Atlanta, Jacksonville, and Miami."

"Fix me up with a ticket on the five-forty flight, honey," he said slowly.

"One way or round trip?" she asked.

"How long is the round trip good for?"

"Thirty days, sir."

"Round trip then, sugar."

"Would you come over to my desk?" she asked as if she were asking him to follow her into her bedroom. He obeyed. When they were seated, she took out a blank ticket form then asked, "Passenger's name?"

"Beatrice Elizabeth Hoke."

"Address?"

"Thirty-nine ninety-nine Greenview."

"Is that North or South Greenview, Mr. Hoke?"

"I'm not Mr. Hoke," Dude informed her. "It's North Greenview."

She completed the ticket, placed it in an envelope, then said, "Boarding time will be forty-five minutes before departure, sir. That will be seventy-one dollars even."

Dude handed her a fifty, a twenty, and a ten and said, "I'd like to use your phone to call Miami. I'll get the charges and pay you out of the ten if it's all right with you."

"Go right ahead," she said and leaned across the desk both to take the money and to give him a better view of her breasts.

He asked the operator for time and charges and told her he wanted to talk person to person to Mr. J. Fred Danker at Danker's Inn in Miami. After what seemed an unusually long wait, the operator said, "The Miami party is on the line, sir. Go ahead, please."

"Hello, Fred? This is Dude Brennan."

"Dude, you old stud! Come on down so I can get some of your money at my Casino," Danker said.

"When I do come down you know I wouldn't gamble anywhere else!" Dude said. "But I'm calling on business. First, Lynn Sullivan and her four kids are arriving there tonight on the Sunshine Dixie Flyer at seven o'clock. Would you have someone pick them up?"

"No problem, Dude," Danker said. "Are they expecting someone to meet them?"

"No, Fred, I forgot to tell her."

"Since I know her I'll go down myself. Why isn't Jack coming along, too?"

Dude paused a moment. "Jack committed suicide a few days ago, Fred. Lynn and the kids needed to get away for a while."

"I understand, Dude. I'll see to it they aren't bothered in any way."

"Also my secretary, Beatrice Hoke, will be arriving on Trans-American at ten-fifteen tonight. She's never been to

Miami so I'd appreciate someone picking her up, too. See if you can give her a room near the Sullivans. Lynn and Bea are friends."

"I'll take care of everything personally," Danker promised.

"Thanks, Fred. One other thing. Don't let them pay for a thing. Send the bill to me."

"Okay, Dude. Your credit is always good with me."

After he hung up, the operator called back with charges: the call cost two dollars and fifteen cents. He repeated this to the girl and, feeling magnanimous, told her she could keep the change from the ten.

"So you're Dude Brennan," she said. "I thought I recognized you. I've seen your picture in the papers. We aren't allowed to take tips, Mr. Brennan. But I get off work at five and usually stop in at Vic's down the street for a martini or two." She looked at him invitingly, and then counted out his change.

Dude smiled at her. "What time does that plane leave again, sugar?"

"Five-forty." She was leaning over again to show him what she was offering, and then added, in a whisper, "I imagine your secretary is old enough to find her way out to the airport by herself. My name is Cathy. Cathy Drake."

He pocketed his change and was about to get up and leave when she placed a cool hand over his and asked, "Are you going to be at Vic's at five, Dude?"

He squeezed the slender tapering fingers and whispered, "Who ever gets there first, try to get us a quiet table."

He was glad to be outside again: he thought that if he had stayed there much longer, he would have invited Miss Drake to join him under her desk. Jesus Christ! he thought, that one is really put together and it's all her. A romp in the sack with her would have to be wild, he speculated.

Looking at his watch, he was surprised to find that it wasn't even ten-thirty. The cool September breeze drifting in off Lake Michigan felt invigorating, so he decided to walk to Van Belson and Tague's. They were about the

finest jewelers in the country, and also the most expensive. Dude had had the county assessor cut their personal property taxes this year by sixty percent, and now it was time to present them with a bill. In Chicago the old adage could never be truer: "Nobody gets nothin' for nothin'".

Two armed guards were stationed in the foyer. He told one of the guards he wanted to see Mr. Tague, and told him who was calling. The guard disappeared through a barred door and Dude sat down in one of the plush chairs by one of the two ornate counters. The joint even smells expensive, he thought.

Tague, the junior partner of the firm, was a tall handsome man in his sixties with wavy gray hair and a gray mustache. He had the appearance of what most people visualize a foreign ambassador or statesman should look like.

He smiled at Dude as he came through the barred door, and when he reached him extended his hand and said, "Mr. Brennan, this is indeed a pleasure. How are you, sir?"

"Fine, thank you, Mr. Tague, and you?"

"Excellent, Mr. Brennan, especially since your kindness in interceding for our firm earlier this year in that distasteful situation with the county assessor."

"Think nothing of it, Mr. Tague," Dude said, and thought, Who is kidding who? You knew that one way or another, eventually, it would cost you.

"And what may I do for you, Mr. Brennan?"

"I would like to buy an engagement ring," Dude said. "I am going to be married in a few weeks."

"Congratulations!" Tague said warmly, and the two shook hands again.

"Please step into my office, Mr. Brennan. I will show you what we have." He led the way up a short flight of stairs into a luxurious office.

Dude seated himself in a chair to the right side of the hand-carved mahogany desk, while Tague entered the walk-in safe that occupied one entire wall, and emerged with four oblong boxes. He placed them on the corner

of the desk opposite Dude, then spread a square of black velvet on the desk near Dude. Dude was impressed.

Then Tague reached into his breast pocket and took out a jeweler's glass. He placed that on the velvet, then inquired, "Are you familiar with how one goes about determining a perfect stone, Mr. Brennan? Please do not take offense; the majority of people do not."

"The only thing I do know, Mr. Tague, is that if I look at a diamond through that magnifying glass of yours I would be able to spot a flaw if there was one," Dude said, revealing his limited knowledge.

Tague explained in some detail about facets, carats, how stones were cut, and flaws. When he finished, he opened the boxes and placed on the velvet some of the most beautiful rings that Dude had ever seen.

Dude inspected several solitaires and asked, "What is the price range of these rings?"

Tague smiled. "What you see here are the finest gems: each is a perfect stone. They are priced between three thousand and nine thousand dollars."

Dude whistled softly, then said, "I believe we are talking prices that are out of my range, Mr. Tague. I brought a little over a thousand with me, and I feel somewhat embarrassed that I have wasted so much of your time."

The suave, charming jeweler shook his head, saying, "Let us not be hasty, Mr. Brennan, please bear in mind that the prices I have quoted you were retail prices. I would be offended if you thought I was going to offer anything at retail. Whatever your choice, you shall have it at cost."

Dude examined four rings he had chosen, and thought, Sure as hell I'll grab the least expensive one. He finally settled on one that had a very unusual but exquisite setting and held it up to Tague. "How much?"

"Thirty-five hundred dollars."

"Retail?"

"Wholesale."

"I quit."

Tague laughed, took the ring from Dude, and placed it in

a small velvet box he took from the middle drawer of the desk, then asked, "Are you quite sure this is the one you prefer?"

"Yes, but I just can't see my way clear to getting it at this time," Dude said provocatively.

The jeweler handed the box to Dude, saying, "Shall we be honest now, Mr. Brennan?"

"By all means," Dude said, accepting the box.

"On behalf of Mr. Van Belson and myself, we would consider it an honor if you would accept the ring as a small token of our thanks for what you did for the firm. And, I might add, out of the kindness of your heart."

"I am truly overwhelmed by your generosity, Mr. Tague," Dude said, and felt like adding, You owe me, cheapskate, so quit the bullshit.

"Then the matter is settled," Tague said, smiling.

The two men shook hands and Dude left thinking regretfully that he could have made out a lot better if Tague had quoted the price of each ring on that desk.

He walked to the nearest drugstore and phoned Bea, and arranged to meet her in half an hour.

Bea was seated at the hotel bar, waiting for him.

"What in hell is going on?" she asked crossly. "I'm beginning to feel like a call girl, checking in and out of hotels. I didn't know how long I was going to have to stay this time so I packed enough to last at least two weeks."

Dude laughed and said, "I'm sorry, Princess, but you know I wouldn't cause you all this trouble if I didn't think it was absolutely necessary."

She was still angry and said, "That snotty desk clerk gave me the fish eye again even though I have two suitcases with me."

"You have never been to Miami, have you?"

"No, and I'm not going, either," she said curtly.

Dude took out the envelope containing the airline ticket, placed it in front of her, and said, "Oh, yes you are."

The expression on Bea's face had altered from one of

anger to one of apprehension when she saw the plane ticket and knew that he was dead serious. Swallowing hard, she asked, "Is Mike going to try to get at me again?"

He shook his head, then told her about Mike's disappearance. "I don't have the faintest idea where he might be. So to be positive there's no chance of his harming you, I'm going to send you to Miami for a week."

"I don't know why I'm supposed to just blindly do whatever you tell me," she said, the anger returning to her voice.

"I've got you registered at Danker's. Lynn and the kids are staying there, too, so you shouldn't be too lonesome."

"Won't that be dandy?" she fired back sarcastically.

"What's eating you, Beatrice?" he asked, using her full first name, something he did only when he was irritated with her. She didn't answer.

"What time does the plane leave?"

"Five-forty this afternoon," he said.

"I guess I'd better get started."

"Why? You have almost four hours."

"I have to go home and pack."

"I thought you had all your stuff here."

"Fall clothes," she said irritably. "I'll need some summer dresses and my swimsuit."

"How about some lunch first?"

"No," she said coldly.

Dude said, just as coldly, "That's fine with me!"

He got up. "I'm going to pay the bill. I'll have the desk send a boy up for your luggage. I'll be outside when you're ready."

While he was waiting, he called his hotel from a lobby phone booth. Max told him that he had had two calls, both within the past hour. First, Al Moran had called and left a short message: "Been canned. Brannigan fired all fourth-ward people." The second was Frank Quinncannon, asking that Dude return the call. But when Dude called the detective's office he was informed that Quinncannon had left the building on an assignment and would not be back until some time after five o'clock.

On the long ride to Bea's Far North Side apartment, they both sat in stony silence. As the taxi pulled up in front of her building, she told the driver to wait for her, that she would only be a few minutes, and asked him to carry one of the suitcases to the door for her and to leave the other in the trunk. When Dude tried to relieve the driver of this chore, she snapped angrily, "You can wait outside, thank you. I can manage by myself nicely."

When she returned, she said, "I'll drop you off at the office, or anywhere you say."

"Knock off the crap, Beatrice!" he said harshly. "We're not going anywhere until you tell me what's bothering you."

"If we miss that flight," she said, "it will be your fault, not mine. It's almost three-thirty now."

"I give up," he said, then to the cab driver: "Drop me off at Vic's Lounge. It's on Wabash, between Adams and Jackson, then take the young lady out to Midway."

They rode back in silence. The cab driver double-parked in front of Vic's. Dude handed the man a twenty and asked if it would cover both the fare and a tip.

"Yes, sir!"

Bea placed her hand on Dude's arm as he was opening the car door and said softly, "I'm sorry Dude. I haven't been feeling too well lately. I shouldn't have taken it out on you."

He smiled, took her hand, and whispered, "And I'm sorry I barked at you. Have a nice time, Princess, and I'll probably call you tomorrow." He leaned over to kiss her. He waved good-bye as the cab drove off and hoped that she would not overlook the three one hundred dollar bills he had put in the envelope with the ticket.

She cried all the way to the airport. "I'll never tell him," she vowed to herself softly.

Her period was now nine days overdue.

Carol Logan was not a vicious girl. She was however extremely selfish, but preferred to view her selfishness as simply being practical. She was an only child, and had

lived in a dingy apartment with her father and stepmother, both of whom were alcoholics. Her father never held onto a job for more than a few weeks at a time. When Carol was fortunate enough to secure a job as a typist in the state's attorney's office, he stopped working altogether. She was forced to turn her paycheck over to him, and the money was used mostly for beer and gin.

She was well aware that the newly elected state's attorney had eyes for her, and when he promoted her to be his personal secretary she planned to maneuver him into an affair. He could well afford to set her up in an apartment, something she desperately wanted, so that she could be rid of her parents.

When the offer was made she accepted immediately. The arrangement suited her perfectly. Brannigan gave her the same amount as her salary after she resigned her position to become his full-time mistress. She never had to spend a penny of her own money, because Brannigan paid for everything. If she wanted new clothes, she merely asked him and he would hand her fifty or a hundred dollars. She began to acquire a substantial bank account.

Most of all she loved the frequent trips to Miami. She would spend her days sunning on the beach, occasionally inviting one of the many beach boys to her room for an afternoon of love-making, keeping her evenings free to spend with Brannigan who took her to all of the fabulous night clubs on Hotel Row.

She was practical, and knew that the bubble would someday burst. When the scandal in the state's attorney's office broke, she began preparing herself for the termination of the affair. She was not surprised when the two men from the attorney general's office came to her apartment that morning and asked her to accompany them downtown to answer some questions and to make a formal statement. Attorney General Krebs, who had been in Chicago for the past several days since the scandal erupted, personally conducted the interrogation of Carol Logan.

When the court reporter finished setting up his steno-

type machine and indicated to Krebs that he was ready, the attorney general cleared his throat and began.

This then was her deposition.

The following deposition of Miss Carol Logan is taken voluntarily in the office of Attorney General Andrew V. Krebs on this the Ninth day of September, in the year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Thirty-Five, in the presence of the following persons:

Mr. Norman Funt, Certified Court Reporter.

Mr. Andrew V. Krebs, Attorney General for the State of Illinois.

Mr. Kenneth R. Talley, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Illinois.

Mr. Martin G. Foreman, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Illinois.

Miss Carol Logan, after being duly sworn, deposes and says that the following statements and answers to Attorney General Andrew V. Krebs's questions are given voluntarily and of her own free will, and are true and correct to the best of her knowledge.

Q. State your full name, please.

A. Carol Anne Logan.

Q. Where do you reside, Miss Logan?

A. Eleven-twelve North Austin Boulevard.

Q. Is that residence in the city of Chicago and the county of Cook?

A. It is.

Q. Do you understand that you are not required to answer any questions asked of you, and any answers or statements you give can be used in a court of law?

A. I understand.

Q. Do you also understand that before answering any

questions, you have the right to consult with an attorney of your own choice, and at any time during this deposition you may halt the proceedings in order to secure counsel?

A. I do.

Q. Do you wish at this time to consult an attorney?

A. No.

Q. Have I, or any person, made any offers to you as reward for giving this testimony?

A. No.

Q. Have I, or any person, coerced, cajoled, forced or threatened you in any manner to give this deposition?

A. No.

Q. It is correct, then, that you have come here today voluntarily, and of your own free will in the interests of seeing justice done?

A. That is correct.

Q. Do you know Mr. William Estes Brannigan, the state's attorney for Cook County?

A. I do.

Q. How long have you been acquainted with him?

A. About three and a half years.

Q. Did you know him before he became the state's attorney?

A. No.

Q. When and how did you meet Mr. Brannigan?

A. I was a secretary in the criminal division of the state's attorney's office, and he introduced himself to all of the girls the first week he was in office.

Q. Isn't it a fact, Miss Logan, that Mr. Brannigan made you his personal secretary shortly after you met him?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there any particular reason why he picked you over all of the other secretaries? Did you have some special skills or talents that qualified you above the others?

A. He seemed to be attracted to me. He would go out of his way to stop by my desk and chat with me.

Q. How long were you employed as his personal secretary?

A. Around eight months, I think.

Q. Did you, during the time you were working as Mr. Brannigan's secretary, engage in a love affair with him?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you aware that Mr. Brannigan was married?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you were aware that you were committing adultery?

A. I never thought of it that way.

Q. How did you think of it?

A. As two people in love.

Q. But you were in fact committing adultery.

A. Yes.

Q. Why did you resign your position as Mr. Brannigan's secretary?

A. Bill, I mean Mr. Brannigan, thought someone would find out about us and possibly tell his wife.

Q. At the time of your resignation, where were you residing and with whom?

A. I lived at Sixteen Hundred North Lamon Avenue with my father and stepmother.

Q. When did you move from the Lamon address?

A. A week after I resigned.

Q. What became your new residence?

A. The Austin Boulevard apartment.

Q. You mean your present address?

A. Yes.

Q. Is the apartment under lease?

A. Yes.

Q. Whose name appears on the lease?

A. Mr. Brannigan's.

Q. How much is the monthly rent?

A. About a hundred and fifty dollars a month, I think.

Q. You don't know the exact amount?

A. No. Mr. Brannigan takes care of paying the rent.

Q. Are you employed at the present time, Miss Logan?

A. No.

Q. When were you last employed, and by whom?

A. I last worked as Mr. Brannigan's secretary, a little over three years ago.

Q. Do you have any source of income?

A. Yes.

Q. Please explain the details.

A. When I resigned, Mr. Brannigan opened a checking account in my name and every two weeks deposited the amount I was receiving when I was employed as his secretary.

Q. Do you know if these deposits are made in cash or by check?

A. No.

Q. Who is the landlord of your apartment building?

A. It is managed by the Michigan Shore Realty Company. They have offices somewhere on LaSalle Street here in the Loop. That's where Mr. Brannigan sends the rent money. I think his former law partner owns the company.

Q. Do you know if Mr. Brannigan pays the rent by check or cash?

A. No.

Q. It is a fact, then, that you are Mr. Brannigan's mistress, and have been since your resignation from the state's attorney's office?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. Other than paying the rent on your apartment and depositing money in your bank account, were there any other times that Mr. Brannigan gave you money or presents?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you tell us, as best you can, the circumstances under which Mr. Brannigan gave you money?

A. Well, any time I needed new clothes, or things for the apartment I would tell Bill, I mean Mr. Brannigan, and he would give me fifty or one hundred dollars, whatever I needed at the time.

Q. Did he ever give you a check, or were these gifts always in cash?

A. Always in cash.

Q. Did you ever accompany Mr. Brannigan on any trips or vacations since you became his mistress?

A. Not exactly.

Q. What do you mean 'not exactly'?

A. Well, whenever Mr. Brannigan took a trip to Miami, he would provide me with a plane ticket and two or three hundred dollars, and I would leave two or three days before him, and check into one of the hotels on Miami Beach. After he arrived, he would meet me in the evenings and we would go dining and dancing. You know, make the tour of the dog tracks, casinos, and night clubs.

Q. Under what name did you register when you visited Miami?

A. My own.

Q. Did Mr. Brannigan ever stay at the same hotel with you?

A. Do you mean for the night, or do you mean did he register there for the whole trip?

Q. I'm sorry, Miss Logan, I meant when he arrived, did he register and use your hotel as his residence at the time?

A. No. He always made it a point to stay at Danker's Inn on the Miami side. That way there would be less chance of anyone seeing us together.

Q. How many of these trips did you take as a guest of Mr. Brannigan?

A. Gosh, I don't know, ten or fifteen at least.

Q. Did you always go to Miami?

A. No. Once we went to New Orleans, and another time to New York.

Q. Did Mr. Brannigan purchase your plane tickets at the airport or did he get them at a travel agency?

A. At a travel agency.

Q. How do you know that?

A. Because the tickets were always in an envelope with the name of the agency on it.

Q. Do you recall the name of the agency?

A. Yes. Vacationland Tours and Cruises Incorporated.

Q. Do you recall whether or not a different agency was ever used?

A. No. Mr. Brannigan always used the same one because his law firm represented them.

Q. When Mr. Brannigan escorted you to the various night clubs, casinos and race tracks, did he ever do any gambling?

A. Yes. He bet quite heavily at the dog tracks.

Q. When you say "quite heavily," can you be a bit more specific?

A. He never bought two dollar tickets like I did; he always bought from the hundred-dollar sellers.

Q. Would you say then that when you visited the dog tracks he would spend somewhere in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars?

A. That would be about right.

Q. Did he win often?

A. Very seldom. I don't recall that he ever broke even.

Q. How many times during one of your trips did you and he attend the dog races?

A. At least twice, sometimes three times.

Q. Did you ever attend the horse races on any of your visits?

A. No. He and I would never meet in the daytime.

Q. Why was that?

A. He always set those trips up when there was a convention going on down there and he would attend all the meetings.

Q. How often did you and Mr. Brannigan visit the gambling casinos during any one trip?

A. Never more than once.

Q. How much money would you approximate he spent on gambling at these places?

A. Never more than a hundred dollars or so. He thought they were all crooked.

Q. Did you do any gambling at any of the casinos?

A. No, not really. I only played the slot machines and never spent more than twenty dollars on those.

Q. Did Mr. Brannigan supply you with any funds with which to gamble?

A. No. He said that if I wanted to gamble I had to use my own money.

Q. When you were employed as a secretary in the state's attorney's office, were you familiar with the operations of the contingency fund?

A. I was aware of its existence, but I never dealt with it. Mr. Brannigan always kept the records and issued the checks on that account himself.

Q. Did you ever wonder how he managed to support both his family and you on his salary?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you and he ever discuss finances together?

A. I'm not sure I should answer that question, Mr. Krebs.

Q. Is that because you fear that you may incriminate yourself by answering?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you believe me if I told you that even without answering that question, I am in a position to prove that you were aware that most, if not all, of the money used to support you came from the contingency fund?

A. I suppose you can.

Q. Would you care to answer the question now?

A. Not unless I am granted immunity from criminal prosecution in return for my testimony.

(Mr. Krebs asks the court reporter to recess the proceedings so he may consult with Mr. Talley and Mr. Foreman.)

(Mr. Krebs asks the court reporter to resume taking testimony in this deposition.)

Q. Miss Logan, at this time it is my opinion as attorney general that the interests of the people of the State of Illinois would be best served by granting you immunity from any criminal action arising from your testimony here today, or from any investigation into the conduct and actions of Mr. William Brannigan. Before you answer, I again ask you, do you wish to consult with an attorney?

A. No.

Q. Do you accept the offer of immunity, and do you wish you continue testifying at this deposition?

A. I accept the offer of immunity and I will answer your questions.

Q. Thank you, Miss Logan. Now, to return to the original question. Have you ever discussed finances with Mr. Brannigan?

A. I have.

Q. Do you recall the first time you ever talked to him about money matters and what was said?

A. Yes. It was during the first trip we made to Miami. I asked him how he could possibly afford the trip, because my hotel bills alone always came to a couple of hundred dollars.

Q. What did he tell you?

A. He laughed and said, "What do you think the contingency fund is for?" I asked him if he meant that it was his expenses that were being paid from that account, and he said that all of the bills for both of us were being paid for out of the fund.

Q. Were you aware that what he was doing was illegal, and tantamount to theft?

A. Not exactly. The way he explained it, he was attending a legitimate convention and he had a right to charge his expenses to the fund, and he was just stretching it a bit by including me. He said that in any case he didn't have to account to anyone how he spent money from the contingency fund.

Q. Was there any other time that you and Mr. Brannigan discussed money matters?

A. Yes. About a year later. I told him that I wanted to move to an apartment on Lake Shore Drive that I had seen advertised in the paper. He became very angry and said that between what he was putting in my bank account and what he was paying for rent on the apartment, he was spending too much from the contingency fund. Up to then I really didn't know that he was paying all my expenses from the fund.

Q. Do you recall any other time that the contingency fund had been discussed by Mr. Brannigan and you?

A. Not until the day the auditors from your department started going over his records.

Q. What, if anything, was said at that time concerning the contingency fund?

A. He told me that for the time being, while your people were auditing him, he wouldn't be able to draw on that account.

Q. Between that time and now, have you had an opportunity to speak with or see him?

A. Yes. He came to the apartment the evening of the day he held the press conference. He told me that after Mr. Morrissey had accused him of stealing, he called the mayor to tell him he was prepared to justify his expenditures. Whalen didn't believe him and made him and Mr. Powell get what records they could from the office and then check into the Richmond-Carlton Hotel under assumed names. The next morning the mayor, Mr. Maher, Mr. Heeney, and Dude Brennan met them and Whalen put Brennan in charge of covering everything up. That day and the next they stayed at the hotel. The story Mr. Brannigan told the press was what Brennan made up and Bill—I mean Mr. Brannigan—was forced to present it as the truth.

Q. Just for the record, Miss Logan, the persons you have made reference to are: James Richard Whalen, mayor of the City of Chicago, Daniel Vincent Maher, patronage director for Mayor Whalen, Thomas Leland Heeney, corporation counsel for the city of Chicago, and Patrick Michael Brennan, the fourth ward democratic committeeman, are they not?

A. They are.

Q. Miss Logan, the accusations you are making are quite serious. Is it your contention that the mayor knew that Mr. Brannigan had been illegally using money from the contingency fund and instead of exposing him or informing my office, he deliberately sought to provide a cover for Mr. Brannigan so that he would not be prosecuted?

A. That is absolutely correct.

Q. But your knowledge that Mayor Whalen was at that hotel and did in fact participate in an alleged conspiracy is based solely on what Mr. Brannigan told you, is that not correct?

A. That is correct.

Q. Then, could it not also be true that Mr. Brannigan might have lied to you? Trying to convince you that the blame lay with Whalen and not himself?

A. Why should he? Whalen was there all right and so was Dude Brennan.

Q. Again Miss Logan, you only have Mr. Brannigan's word for it, and I am afraid that that is not enough. Do you have knowledge of any other person or persons who might be able to substantiate your claims?

A. Yes. Brennan's secretary was there too. I doubt that she would lie about it. Oh, yes, Mr. Brannigan said that a man by the name of Gavin, he's the manager or owner or something at the Richmond-Carlton, arranged for everything, and personally screened everyone entering the suite where they met.

Q. At any time during your association with Mr. Brannigan, were you ever offered a check by him drawn on any county or state account?

A. I never received a check of any kind by Mr. Brannigan. He always gave me cash.

Q. Should Mr. Brannigan or anyone else be indicted as a result of your testimony here today, or from results in our investigation of the state's attorney's office, would you be willing to testify in an open court on the matters in question?

A. I would.

Q. Is there anything else you can add to what you have already testified to here today.

A. No. That is everything I know.

Q. Are the answers and statements you have given in this deposition true and correct to the best of your knowledge?

A. They are.

Q. Mr. Talley, do you have any questions you would care to ask Miss Logan?

A. No, sir. (Mr. Talley answering.)

Q. Mr. Foreman, do you have any questions to ask Miss Logan?

A. None, Mr. Krebs. (Mr. Foreman answering.)

Mr. Court Reporter, let the record indicate that the deposition of Miss Carol Anne Logan is hereby concluded.

After the court reporter and Carol Logan left the office, Kenneth Talley let out a low whistle and said, "Boy, did she open up a can of worms!"

"Do you think she's aware what a blowup this is going to cause?" Foreman asked.

"Vaguely," Krebs answered. "She's pretty vindictive about Whalen and the others canceling her meal ticket. She wants to see them roast, but I doubt she realizes how much scandal there'll be."

"Do you think she'll testify in court?" Talley asked.

"Definitely. She has no intention of going to jail," the attorney general responded. He rubbed his jaw for a moment then said, "Marty, you subpoena the records of the travel agency and the Lake Shore Realty Company. Ken, you see if you can get this man Gavin and Brennan's secretary to come here voluntarily and give their depositions."

"I'll have the subpoenas issued and served today," Foreman said.

"We may just be able to break the Whalen machine for good," Krebs said thoughtfully.

Andrew Krebs had no doubt that within a few days he would be fully prepared to go before a grand jury and secure indictments against Brannigan, Whalen, Maher, Heeney, and Brennan.

The attorney general was pleased.

It was a few minutes past four when Dude entered Vic's Castaways Lounge. There were only a half dozen or so customers seated at the bar.

Dude headed for the phone booth in the foyer, and called the Royale. Frank Quinncannon had called a second time and had told the room clerk that he would be in his office by four and asked that Dude call him as soon as possible; it was urgent. Whalen's secretary had called: the mayor wanted to see Dude before five.

Dude immediately phoned the chief of the police department's narcotics division.

"Narcotics. Lieutenant Quinncannon."

"Hello, Frank. I've been trying to catch up with you all afternoon. What's up?"

"I can't talk now, Dude, but I have to see you as soon as possible. I'll be leaving here around five. Where do you want to meet?" Frank asked.

Dude thought for a moment and decided that Cathy Drake would have to wait until another time. "I'm going to Whalen's office now, but I don't think I'll be there very long. How about the Randolph Corners between five and five-thirty?"

"All right. See you then."

Danny Maher was in the office with Whalen when Dude walked in. "Were you looking for me, Jim?"

"Yeah," Whalen said, "sit down, son."

He pulled up a chair next to Maher.

"Brannigan fired everyone in his office sponsored from your ward, Dude," Whalen said gravely.

"I know. Al Moran called me earlier and left a message that Brannigan axed all my people," Dude said.

Whalen looked down at the notepad in front of him for a moment then said, "Danny tells me that including clerks, secretaries, and so forth, the number of persons who were let go is twenty-one. Does that sound about right to you?"

"Right on the nose," Dude said. "And unfortunately every damn one of them is a good precinct captain."

"That's bad," the mayor said. "We certainly can't afford to lose good captains this close to the election. How many of Dude's people can you put to work right now, Danny?"

The patronage director said, "No problem with the clerks, stenos, and typists. I have openings in the assessor's office and the county treasurer's office at about the same rate of pay. But frankly, I don't know what the hell to do with the others. I can find places for the investigators, but at about half the salary they get now. The prosecutors are out all the way: they are lawyers and won't take anything outside their field, and I think Dude will agree with me on that."

Dude nodded and said, "I'm pretty sure I can convince the investigators to take whatever is open now, and after the election see that they get their old jobs back. The prosecutors I'm afraid we will just have to write off altogether."

Whalen leaned back in his chair and lit a long cigar before replying. "Dude, you and Danny get together and put as many of those people to work as you can and let's hope for the best."

"Danny?" Dude asked. "Can you find me a good secretary and have her over at the ward office by tomorrow morning to fill in for Bea for a week or two? I don't want Bea around while Mike is still on the prowl."

"Got just the girl." Maher smiled. "Margie O'Banion. She had twins a few months ago and they're driving her nuts. She's dying to get back to work, even if it's only temporary. She's damn good; she used to be Ward's secretary."

"I remember her," Dude said. "A little rollypoly girl. Always smiling."

"Did you put those stocks in your safe-deposit box, Dude?" Whalen interrupted.

"Yep. Right after I left here this morning. By the way, Jim, have you had a chance to talk to Ward yet?" Dude asked.

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"Yes. I was right, he hasn't bought a single share of stock since before the crash," the mayor said.

Dude rose. "I'll talk to both of you in the morning. I think things are looking up for a change. I just hope that Krebs boils Brannigan's ass in oil."

The five o'clock crowd had already invaded the Randolph Corners Inn by the time Dude got there. Quinn-cannon had not yet arrived. Dude found a spot at the bar, ordered a double martini, and wished he had told Frank to meet him at Vic's instead. He was thinking about Cathy Drake's open blouse, and had decided to call Vic's and tell her to wait for him when Frank sat down beside him.

"Jesus Christ!" the detective said. "Couldn't you find a more crowded place to meet?"

"I didn't know everyone from City Hall would be in here today."

Eddie took Frank's order, and when he moved down to the far end of the bar to mix the bourbon and water, Frank said softly, "Rudy Karwowski was released from County this morning. We took him over and booked him on a possession charge. Conforti had one of his bondsmen get him out before the ink was dry on the blotter. I had a tail put on him, but the bastard spotted it and shook it."

"Do you think he'll try to get to Jackie?" Dude asked worriedly.

"I don't think so."

"You're not leveling with me, Frank," Dude said. "There's something you aren't telling me. What is it?"

The drink arrived: the detective took a sip of it then looked at Dude and said, "When we booked him he told me to tell you that he was going to get even with you if it was the last thing he ever did. I think it's just a lot of big talk."

"You don't sound very convinced, Frank."

"I know," he said quietly. "The thing is, you never really know what a psycho like him is liable to do. Look, Dude, I can't send any of my men out to guard Jackie unless

they do it on their own time. It's out of our jurisdiction. Just say the word and I'll have her protected until she gets out. By the way, I just spoke with my men who are watching Bea's place and they haven't seen hide nor hair of Mike."

"I sent Bea down to Miami this afternoon for a couple of weeks, Frank, so you can take your men off the detail," Dude said absently, staring at his drink. Then he said, "Tell your men they can have a good job on their off-duty time. I'll pay two bucks an hour to see nothing happens to Jackie. How soon will you be able to have someone out there, Frank?"

"I'll be able to have two men start a shift by eleven tonight."

Dude took five hundred dollars out of his wallet and handed it to Frank, saying, "When this is used up, let me know. I want your men to be paid promptly."

"Okay, partner, and don't worry. We have a big advantage. All of my men know that Polack by sight."

After a few moments of silence, Dude asked, "Frank, what do you know about a drug called heroin?"

The detective shrugged his shoulders and said, "It's something new, a derivative of morphine. Some think that it's a new cure-all for addiction among morphine and cocaine users. Others claim that it is just another opiate and just as addictive. I don't know; we don't know that much about it."

"It might be worth your while to check into Conforti's narcotic activities a little closer. I hear that he and Rudy were going into business in a big way with this stuff," Dude said.

"I'll get on it," Quinncannon said.

They each had another drink, and after Dude had paid the bill he turned to Frank and asked, "Can you give me a lift over to the office? I want to pick up my car and take a run out to see Jackie. I'll stay with her until your men can get on the job."

"Sure, pal, let's get out of here."

On the way to the ward leader's office, the detective

said, "I've got a hunch that you might have it on your mind to visit Conforti and tell him to put a collar on Karwowski. Am I right?"

When Dude didn't answer, Quinncannon said, "Don't do it, Dude. Conforti is going out of his way to protect him. They have something brewing, and right now he's more important to Conforti than you are. If anything, he'll probably lean on you and tell you to stay away from him."

"I'll give it some thought, Frank," Dude said. "You just make sure your men are out there tonight."

The detective dropped Dude off and headed for home. He had the uneasy feeling that his friend was moving into deep trouble. Quinncannon decided that he would instruct the men watching Jackie to shoot the dope peddler on sight, then plant a gun in his hand. Quinncannon hadn't dared to tell Dude that he believed Karwowski would definitely try to kill one of them.

A cold front swept into the Northern Illinois area late that afternoon. The temperature dropped steadily. According to the weather report that Dude only half heard on his car radio, the temperature would drop to near freezing by morning.

It was cold and dark when he reached the Forest Park Village limits. He pulled the Packard into an alley two blocks away from the gangster's restaurant hangout and turned off the lights. He waited, studying the rear-view mirror. After several minutes he was convinced that no one was following him.

When he walked into the restaurant he saw at a glance that neither Conforti nor his two goons were there. Dude went over to the bar. Dude had never seen this bartender before: he was a big ugly man who had a thick purplish scar running in an arc from his left eye down to the left side of his mouth. Dude wondered what this big ox had done to the guy who got near enough to cut him like that, and decided he was probably pushing up daisies now.

"What'll you have?" the ox asked, neither friendly nor unfriendly.

"I want you to contact Mr. Conforti as soon as you can," Dude said in his most menacing voice. "And tell him that Dude Brennan was here and said that he had better find Rudy Karwowski before I do or I'll kill him. And tell him that if anything happens to Jacqueline Devereaux he is going to be the sorriest sonofabitch that ever walked. You got that?"

The bartender nodded that he understood, but did not answer.

After Dude left the restaurant, the bartender removed his apron, rang up a "no sale" on the cash register, took out a nickel, and walked to the pay phone in the rear of the restaurant.

Forty-five minutes later Dude turned into the driveway of the Parkway Convalescent Home. It was cold. The powerful headlights on his car illuminated the whole driveway. Before he reached the entrance to the hospital he saw them, and felt sick.

There were three squad cars, parked at angles blocking the driveway. On the front door of one of the cars, printed in neat white letters were the words: CITY OF WILMETTE POLICE. Beyond the cars, Dude saw a long gray-and-black hearse. Probably from one of the local funeral homes, he thought. He pulled the Packard off the driveway and parked it on the lawn. He turned off the lights and the ignition and sat there. Several men were standing near the entrance: all were strangers. Before he got out of the car he whispered, "Dear God, don't let it be Jackie they've come for."

He had to force himself to take each step up to the hospital door. He wanted to run away. Get drunk. Pretend he never saw the hearse. Come back tomorrow. Anything.

The two detectives who were blocking the door had been watching him since he stepped out of his car. When he was standing in front of them, the older of the two policemen recognized the haunted look in Dude's eyes.

Quietly, the detective asked, "May I help you, sir?"

"I want to see Dr. Kessell," Dude mumbled, feeling light-headed and a little dizzy.

"What is your name?"

"Ah . . . Brennan . . . Ah, Patrick Brennan."

"Just a minute, sir." The detective's voice was very quiet. He hurried into the hospital to get the doctor. When Ben Kessell opened the door and saw Dude there, he knew that the police cars had warned Dude: he had guessed that something had happened to Jackie. Kessell recognized the signs of severe shock in Dude.

"Come in Dude," he said, and took his arm, leading him gently.

Dude was walking zombielike, a fuzziness in his brain. He knew that there was something that he wanted to ask Ben, but he couldn't remember what it was. The doctor said something to a nurse, but Dude didn't understand although he heard the words clearly.

The doctor led Dude into his office, had him remove his jacket and tie, and roll up his right shirt sleeve. Dude followed the instructions, feeling that he must not think of anything, or something terrible would happen.

Dr. Kessell said quietly, "Lie down on the couch, Dude. I'm going to give you a little medication, and you will be all right in a few minutes."

He did as he was told. When he was stretched out flat on the couch with his eyes closed, some of the fuzziness in his head began to clear.

A nurse entered the office and handed the doctor a hypodermic syringe. The nurse rubbed a small area on Dude's bare arm with an alcohol-soaked piece of cotton.

Kessell said, "I am going to give you an injection, Dude. It's not going to hurt, and in a few minutes you'll be feeling much better."

Dude opened his eyes, smiled slightly, and watched his friend administer the shot, then closed his eyes again.

In less than fifteen minutes Dude snapped out of it. Physically he felt all right, and he was calm. He knew where he was, and why he was there.

"They've killed her, haven't they?" Dude said as he sat up on the couch and began rubbing his eyes.

"Yes."

"What happened, Ben?" Dude demanded.

"It's not too clear just what did happen," the doctor said. "Sometime before the dinner trays were served, between five and six o'clock, someone slipped into her room. She must have been sleeping at the time because no one heard a thing. Whoever it was held a pillow over her face, then gave her a shot directly into the heart. She died instantly. Before the killer left the room, he tossed the empty syringe on the floor, then crushed it under his heel. We can't be sure until the autopsy is performed, but I think she was given a hot shot."

"Cyanide?" Dude asked hoarsely, the color beginning to drain from his face again.

"I'm afraid so."

"Is she still here, Ben?" he whispered.

"Yes, but they will be taking her away in a few minutes. I don't want you to see her, Dude. I don't think you are up to it."

"I want to see her, Ben! When they take her away I'll never see her again."

When Dude stepped into Jackie's room, he hated it. It was no longer the bright and cheerful room he had been in only yesterday. My God! he thought, it was only yesterday. Yesterday, when she had looked up at him out of her "doe" eyes and said in that soft melodic voice he would never hear again, "I love you, Irish." He bit his lower lip hard.

She was still lying in the bed. A sheet had been pulled up over her face. Two funeral-home attendants had wheeled a stretcher up to the bed and were preparing to place her on it when the nurse saw Dude and Dr. Kessell. She whispered something to the attendants and they wheeled the stretcher to the far side of the room, then stepped out into the hall.

Dude recognized the nurse: it was Mrs. Hansen. As he

walked to the bed, she murmured, "I am so very sorry, Mr. Brennan."

"I would . . . like . . . like to . . . I . . ." He couldn't get the sentence out.

"Don't, Dude—please!" The doctor pleaded. It was no use: he looked at the nurse helplessly, then nodded to her. Carefully she pulled the sheet from Jackie's face and stepped back.

When Dude saw her, a sharp pain slammed into his chest and his left hand automatically shot up and pressed against it.

Dr. Kessell saw that. "Are you okay, Dude?" he asked swiftly.

Dude nodded and waved him away. In that fleeting second when first he saw her face he thought she was still alive. She looked as though she were sleeping. He turned for a moment toward Mrs. Hansen.

His mind would not accept the fact that she was really dead. His eyes pleaded with the nurse to tell him that there had been some terrible mistake, that Jackie was not dead, after all.

The nurse had never felt such deep pity for another human being in her life. She touched his arm, and whispered, "You must go now, Mr. Brennan."

He nodded, then looked at Jackie. He remembered that she had said, "Kiss me before you go, Irish," and he bent down and kissed her lips and murmured, "Good-bye, kitten."

When they returned to Ben's office, Dude asked his friend to call O'Keefe's and make the arrangements for him. Then for the first time it struck him. "Mother of God!" he said. "What am I going to tell Kimmie?"

"I hope you don't mind, Dude," the doctor said. "I called Maude about an hour ago and told her. I think it would be best if she told Kimmie."

"Thanks Ben, for everything," he said. Dude put on his jacket, ready to leave. He reached into his pocket for a cigarette, and his hand closed around the tiny box that held the engagement ring.

Frank Quinncannon was stretched out on the sofa reading Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* when the phone rang. After the third ring, he decided that his wife was going to outwait him, so he padded across the living-room floor in his bare feet and picked up the receiver.

"Hello," he said, stifling a yawn.

"Lieutenant? This is Grogan."

"What is it, Tim?" Grogan and his partner were the first pair assigned to guard Jackie. He glanced at his watch. It was exactly eleven-ten.

"Art Lawton and I got out here a few minutes ago," Grogan said. "Dr. Kessell, he's in charge of the place, told us that the lady we were supposed to watch, a Miss Devereaux, was murdered sometime between five and six this evening."

"Oh, my God!" the detective moaned. "Oh, no!"

"I'm sorry, sir. What do you want us to do now?" Grogan asked.

"Let me think, goddamn it!" Quinncannon shouted into the telephone, then was immediately sorry. "I didn't mean to holler at you, Tim, it's just that this is one hell of a shock."

"I understand, chief. Art and I are available for the rest of the night; you just let us know what you want us to do. I'll call back in a few minutes if you want."

"Wait, Tim. First, did the Wilmette Police pick up anyone?"

"No, sir. According to the doctor, no one saw the killer enter or leave the hospital. They don't even know if it's a man or a woman they are looking for. Whoever it was gave her a hot shot of cyanide directly into the heart."

Quinncannon knew what he had to do now, and started putting the wheels in motion. "Get on your radio and send out an APB on Rudy Karwowski. He is wanted for questioning in connection with the murder of Jacqueline Lee Devereaux. Contact homicide and have them seal off the airport, train, and bus stations. Then beat it back to the city as fast as that car will go, and stake out Dude Brennan's office and apartment. Sooner or later tonight

he'll show. When he does, I want him picked up. Book Brennan on an open charge and don't let anyone near him even if you have to get into the cell with him. I'll be downtown, so call me when you get him."

"On our way, Lieutenant," the detective said and hung up.

Next he called his office and ordered two men to the Lake Shore Drive apartment, and instructed them to stay in the apartment with Kim and Maude for the rest of the night. Then he ordered every available man to drop whatever assignment they were on, and find Karwowski.

He rushed into the bedroom to dress. His wife was sitting at the dressing table combing her hair. She looked up, startled, when he hurried into the room. "What's wrong, Frank?" she asked. "I heard you shouting on the phone."

He was slipping on his shoulder holster and adjusting the strap when he answered. "Rudy Karwowski murdered Dude Brennan's girlfriend tonight out in Wilmette and I've got to—" He stopped in midsentence and rushed back into the living room and picked up the phone. He told the operator who he was and that it was a police emergency. He gave her the unlisted number of the Lake Shore Drive apartment, and in less than thirty seconds Maude was on the line. "Maude, this is Frank, are you and Kimmie all right?"

"Yes, Frank."

"Do you know what happened tonight?"

"Yes. Dr. Kessell called me. Frank, I haven't heard from Dude all night. About ten I called Dr. Kessell back and he said that Dude had been there but had left hours ago. I'm afraid something has happened to him."

"Let me worry about that, Maude," he said. "Listen, within a few minutes two of my men will be knocking at your door. They will be Sergeant Fordyce and Officer Arnaud. Don't open the door for anyone until they get there, and don't open the door for them until they identify themselves. Don't forget, Fordyce and Arnaud."

"I understand."

"I'll be by in the morning," he said, and hung up before she could question him.

When he returned to the bedroom he said to his wife, "Karwowski is insane. Thank God he didn't get to Jackie's daughter. I've got my men on the way over to guard her and Maude Fallon now." He pulled on his suit coat, kissed his wife on the cheek, and said, "I don't know how long I'll be or when I'll be home, honey, but if you need me you can reach me at the office."

During the drive down to his office at Eleventh and State, Quinncannon worried about the situation. Somewhere out in that black wilderness were two men. One a psychopath who had killed once and was looking to kill again, and the other a man who had never killed before but was on his way to try. Each, he knew, at this moment, was stalking the other and somehow he had to find them before they met.

The effects of the shot Dr. Kessell had given him had worn off by the time Dude parked the car in front of his darkened office.

He reached into the glove compartment for a flashlight. He rolled down the window on the driver's side of the Packard and played the beam along the shadowed doorways across the street from the office, then rolled down the window on the passenger's side and shined the light into the doorway of his office, then on the doorways on either side.

The street was empty: not even the usual few bums and panhandlers were stumbling down the sidewalk, or sitting on the curbs. The cold snap had driven them indoors.

Dude waited until a streetcar passed, heading east on Madison, the bell clanging noisily in the deserted street, before he left the car and unlocked the door to the ward headquarters. Once inside he snapped the lock on the door and stood there a few moments allowing his eyes to become accustomed to the gloom. There was enough light filtering through the big plate-glass window from the out-

side so that it was not necessary to turn on the office lights and make a target of himself.

When he could see well enough in the dark, he went to his desk, sat down, and opened the lower right-hand drawer. He took a Colt .45 automatic and two full clips of cartridges from the drawer and placed them on the desk. He held the gun in his right hand, and loaded it. He pushed the safety catch on with his thumb, leaving the hammer back in the cocked position, then replaced the gun on his desk.

He went to the first of the three file cabinets against the wall and, after fumbling a moment or two with the keys, unlocked it and pulled open the top drawer. He took out several packets of envelopes, each consisting of ten envelopes apiece and held together with a rubber band, and placed them in the top middle drawer of Bea's desk. They contained the funds for his precinct captains to use for the two-week voter-registration drive that had started that morning in the old fire station on Taylor Street. He should have been in the office all day so they could have been distributed, but Marge O'Banion could see to that in the morning.

He returned to his desk and picked up his phone and asked the operator to get him the number of the O'Banion who lived in the vicinity of Comisky Park, around Thirty-fifth and Shields.

Not knowing the name of Marge's husband made the operator's chore more difficult. The operator informed him that there were three O'Banions listed on the south side of the city. He asked her to ring each one until he was connected with the right one. He was not surprised, especially with the kind of luck he was having lately, that the third call proved to be the correct one.

"Mr. O'Banion, this is Dude Brennan; I hope I'm not disturbing you."

"Not at all, Mr. Brennan," O'Banion said. "Mr. Maher phoned earlier and told Margie that you needed some help at your office for a few days, and she's delighted. Do you want to speak with her?"

"That won't be necessary, Mr. O'Banion. Just tell her that she can pick up the keys to the office from the desk clerk at the Hotel Royale just next door. There's a sheet of instructions for things she can start on right away sitting on my secretary's desk. Also, in the desk are some envelopes. Each has a name and precinct number on it. From time to time during the day tomorrow the men will be stopping by to pick them up. I'm leaving a twenty-dollar bill under the phone on my secretary's desk. Marge is to take a cab to and from work at my expense. I probably won't be in the office in the morning, but tell Mrs. O'Banion I will be calling in several times during the day. I guess that about covers it."

"All right Mr. Brennan, I'll tell her, and thank you."

He found a twenty among the bills in his wallet and put it under the phone on Bea's desk. He stood for a moment surveying the office, trying to think if there was anything else that Marge needed to know. He decided that she would be able to manage until he called.

He walked back to his desk, picked up the huge automatic, and tucked it in his belt on the right side. He slipped the extra cartridge clip into his suit-coat pocket and headed for the door. He cautiously stepped out of the doorway after he locked the office, paused, scanned the street, then half-ran to the hotel next door.

Max was behind the desk when he entered, and, as usual, was reading a copy of the racing form. Dude wondered if he ever went to sleep. He and Artie, the elevator man, shared a room in another hotel just down the street and apparently they seldom used it. He supposed it was because Max, the one-armed man, being Conforti's chief bagman for the area, and in charge of the horse room, didn't want anything happening that he didn't know about. As he reached the desk he glanced toward the elevator and saw old Artie sound asleep in the wicker chair, and smiled. He liked them both.

"Hello, Max, I want you to do me a favor."

The one-arm man nodded. Dude handed him the keys to the office and the file cabinets. "A Mrs. O'Banion will stop

by for these around eight-thirty in the morning. She will be filling in for Miss Hoke."

"I'll see that she gets them," Max said, then he placed the keys in an envelope and wrote Marge's name on the outside.

"Do you have any messages for me?" Dude asked.

"Just one," Max said. "Mandy, the barkeep in Forest Park called an hour or so ago and said to tell you that Mr. Conforti is vacationing down in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and he was unable to relay your message."

"Thanks, Max. I'll talk to you tomorrow," he said, then headed for the door.

After a quick look around, he ducked out of the hotel and hurried to the car. Before opening the car door, he glanced in at the back seat to make sure no one was hiding there. Satisfied that Rudy had not as yet caught up with him, he got into the Packard and headed for the hotel where he was registered under a fictitious name. He decided to stash the car. It was too easily recognizable.

He thought of Kimmie and Maude's safety, but was dead sure that Karwowski had no way of knowing where they were. Very few people knew of the existence of the Lake Shore Drive apartment, and fewer knew where it was, and who lived there. Besides, even if the dope-peddler somehow had stumbled across the address, Maude would never open the door for anyone unless she knew who it was. She carried an ugly-looking .38 Smith and Wesson snub-nosed revolver in her purse at all times, and he knew that she would have it handy tonight.

Mandy, the ugly ox at the Forest Park headquarters for the outfit boss, had lied to Max: Dude knew damn well that Conforti did not leave town. It was just his way of letting Dude know that his messages would be ignored, and that he might as well forget about trying to contact him. He smiled slightly, thinking, that goddamn dago got my message all right, and hoped Conforti had already dispatched DePalma and Infantolini to execute the Polack before Dude got around to it.

He nearly missed the driveway leading up to the hotel,

and when he whipped the wheel hard to the right, the tires of the Packard screeched loudly. When he alighted from the car, Dude told the doorman to put it away for the night and walked rapidly into the hotel, across the lobby, and up to the front desk. He asked the desk clerk if it was possible for him to rent a car for the next day or two, that his own car had developed clutch trouble. The man informed him that the hotel had three cars available for just such emergencies. There was no charge to the guest: all that was required was a hundred-dollar deposit which would be returned when the car was no longer needed.

Dude gave him a one hundred dollar bill and told him to have the car brought around and left with the doorman. He would pick it up in a few minutes. The desk clerk handed him a receipt for the hundred dollars. Dude then headed for the cocktail lounge. A convention of farm implement salesmen was being held at the hotel and several of them were in the lounge, well on their way to becoming drunk, talking very loud.

There was a seat available near the end of the bar and he headed for it. The end chair was occupied by a very pretty dark-haired girl. She was obviously alone.

Dude asked, "Is this seat taken?"

She smiled prettily, and said in a soft voice, "No, it isn't."

He quickly turned away from the girl and sat down, feeling a tight knot in his belly, because she resembled and even sounded vaguely like Jackie. The bartender headed his way, and Dude recognized him: he had once tended bar at the Randolph Corners Inn.

"Patrick Michael Brennan himself!" the bartender said in a booming voice, and extended his hand to Dude.

"Nice to see you again, Denny. I didn't know you were working here now," Dude said, shaking the outstretched hand.

"Been here about two years now, Dude. I see that you are running for alderman this year. Good luck."

"Thanks, Denny. How about a double martini on the rocks?"

"Still drinking the same thing, I see." Denny grinned, and hurried to the center of the bar to mix the drink. When it was set before him, Dude picked it up and drained it. He set the glass down on the bar and took a deep breath. When the alcohol hit his empty stomach, it almost came right up again. He remembered then that he had not eaten all day.

"Hey, take it easy, Dude," the bartender said. "Keep that up and I'll have to take you home in a wheelbarrow."

"Get me another, Denny," Dude said, unsmiling.

The man looked at Dude, shrugged, and went to mix another.

Dude took his cigarettes out of his breast pocket where he had transferred them so that he would not again touch the ring box. He lit one and left the pack on the bar. He would give the damn ring to the desk clerk to put in the hotel safe until he decided what to do with it.

Denny returned, placed the second martini in front of him, and walked away. Dude took a sip of the fresh drink, then glanced at his watch. It was nine-seventeen. He would have a fairly good head start before Quinncannon found out what happened. Frank wouldn't learn of the murder until his men showed up at Parkway, and that wouldn't be until eleven o'clock. After that, he knew that the detective would issue orders to have him picked up before he killed the Polack or the Polack killed him.

Frank had said that he and Ed Dunne put the arm on Rudy in front of Wrigley Field. That would mean that the weasel was probably working the Near North Side area. There were several joints around the Rush Street and Old Town or Little Bohemia neighborhoods where junkies congregated. Dude thought he might as well get started. If he passed enough five dollar bills around, someone might recall seeing Rudy tonight. He picked up his cigarettes, paid the tab, and left two dollars for Denny as compensation for being rude to him.

At the front desk, the clerk told him that his car was out front any time he was ready. Dude thanked him, and handed him the box containing the engagement ring and asked him to put it in the hotel safe. He had to wait while the man made out a receipt, then Dude gave him another hundred dollar bill and got it changed into fives and tens.

The hotel car was a black two-door Chevy coupe only a year or two old. It handled smoothly as Dude pulled out of the hotel driveway and turned north on Michigan Boulevard. At Chicago Avenue he turned east to Lake Shore Drive then north to Fullerton Avenue. When he reached Fullerton he turned west, drove the few short blocks to Clark Street, then turned south and slowed down looking at the names of the seedy taverns on both sides of the street.

Five bars later and twenty-five dollars lighter he decided that the Polack must have passed the word that Dude was looking for him. Nothing. Further bar-hopping would only serve to lighten his bankroll still more. He was rapidly becoming discouraged.

He sat in the car chain-smoking, trying to think of some place where Rudy might be holed up. He drew a blank. He decided he would try one more bar, then call it quits. Just north of Division Street he spotted the sign that said Jockey Club. It looked interesting.

It was no different from any other sleazy North Clark Street gin mill. There was a long bar, and four or five tables. He found an empty bar stool and, while he was waiting for the bartender to notice him, wondered how in hell whoever owned the dump arrived at the name Jockey Club. It was certainly no club, and if any jockeys frequented the place, they sure weren't in there tonight.

The fat bartender finally ambled over. "What's yours?" he asked, then grinned, showing his customer that his four front teeth were missing.

"Bourbon and water." Dude grinned back.

There were only four or five customers at the bar. When the toothless mixologist returned, he said, "Gettin' cold out,

ain't it?" He folded his fat arms and leaned on the bar.

"Yeah. Weatherman says it'll be in the thirties by morning," Dude replied.

The barkeep unfolded an arm, dipped into the pretzel bowl directly in front of him, then asked, "Yer new around here, aintcha?"

"Yeah," Dude said nonchalantly. "Matter of fact, I'm supposed to meet a friend of mine in here around eleven, eleven-thirty."

"Whose yer friend? I know everybody that hangs in here."

"Rudy Karwowski. Know him?"

"Oh, yeah. Little guy. Kind of nervous."

"Seen him tonight?"

"Maybe."

Dude took a ten dollar bill from his pocket and folded it slowly so that the bartender could see the denomination, then slid it across the bar. The toothless man picked up the bill, quickly placed it in his shirt pocket, then asked suspiciously, "You a cop?"

"No. Have you seen him?"

"He was in around ten o'clock, had a couple of drinks, then left," the bartender said warily.

"Did he say whether or not he was coming back?" Dude asked.

"Say! I thought you said you was meetin' him here," the man said hostilely. "You sure you ain't no cop?"

"No, I ain't no cop," Dude mimicked him. "Did he say where he was going?"

"No," the bartender said sullenly.

"Any idea where I can find him?"

"I dunno."

Dude itched to reach across the bar and remove a few more of the man's teeth for him, but instead he fished another ten from his pocket and dropped it on the bar. "How's the memory now?"

"Ya might try the Iroquois Hotel over on Loomis and Madison. I think he got a broad there," the man said, earning his money.

"Thanks, pal," Dude said, and headed for the door.

"Hey? Ain't cha gonna finish yer drink?"

The Iroquois Hotel was a cheap flophouse on West Madison Street that was a whorehouse and a flop for addicts. Dude parked the Chevy at the end of the block and across the street from the hotel, where he had a clear view of the entrance without much chance of anyone noticing him.

At twenty minutes past twelve Dude was ready to call it a night. He was just about to place his foot on the starter when he saw him. Karwowski walked out of the hotel, stopped, lit a cigarette, turned west and started walking toward the Chevy.

Dude was smiling as he eased the automatic from his waistband and released the safety.

The big Western Union clock on the squad-room wall read twelve-thirty-one. Quinncannon had been looking up at it every five minutes since midnight. In the hour and a half since the call from Grogan, not a trace of either Brennan or Karwowski had been found, and with each passing minute the detective knew that the odds on both of them still being alive were dwindling. Every one of the known hangouts of the dope peddler had been staked out since eleven-thirty by his men or the detectives assigned to homicide-vice. Quinncannon and Captain Lew Case of central homicide had conferred at length by phone with Wilmette's chief of police, Colin Barry, offering their full cooperation in the murder investigation, and making available to him and his men the use of the Chicago Police Department's excellent crime lab.

It was one thing to know that Karwowski had murdered Jacqueline Devereaux, but proving it without evidence was something else again. Quinncannon, as well as every other policeman working on the case, knew damn well that if and when they picked Karwowski up, they wouldn't be able to hold him seventy-two hours at a time on an open charge, that is, without booking him and shuffling him around from station house to station house almost in-

definitely as they sometimes did with other prisoners, trying for a confession. Not so with this bird. Conforti's lawyers would be tossing writs of habeas corpus around like they were confetti.

At twelve-forty the phone on Quinncannon's desk rang loudly and startled him momentarily. He picked it up and barked, "Quinncannon."

"Officer Long in communications, Lieutenant. Just received a signal nine from homicide one-twenty-five, and a request for a meat wagon, code three."

"Where did the shooting take place, Long?"

"Southeast corner of Loomis and Madison, sir."

"Did homicide identify the victim yet?" The detective lieutenant was edgy. The shooting had occurred practically in front of Karwowski's apartment on Ogden Avenue.

"One-twenty-five canceled the code three on the ambulance, Lieutenant, and made it a code one, and the coroner has been notified. The victim has been tentatively identified as Rudolph Karwowski, subject of an 11:14 P.M. APB, wanted for questioning in connection with a murder investigation, your office," the communications officer informed him.

"Did one-twenty-five advise having identified an assailant, or arrest of a suspect?"

"Negative, Lieutenant."

"Thank you, Long. I'm leaving for the scene now, so if I'm wanted for anything I'll be on the air."

Goddammit, Quinncannon thought, Dude would have to be arrested and charged with murder One regardless of the provocation. Why couldn't the sonofabitch have left Karwowski to us? And immediately knew the answer: there wasn't a shred of evidence linking him with the murdered girl, and Dude knew it.

There were at least three hundred curious people in the vicinity of Loomis and Madison Streets. Two uniformed officers were trying to direct the flow of traffic, and disperse the crowd at the same time. They were losing ground on both fronts. Before Quinncannon got out of his

car, he radioed the dispatcher and instructed him to send reinforcements to the two harried traffic men.

He pushed through the crowd, to where several detectives were standing, and peered between the shoulders of two police photographers who were taking pictures of the body. There was no mistaking the rat face. It was Karwowski. He stared up at the lieutenant, wide-eyed and quite dead. One bullet had entered his left cheek, leaving a small round hole, and had exited just above the right temple, ripping a hole a bit larger than the size of a silver dollar in the bone and flesh. A second slug had caught him exactly in the middle of the throat.

When Frank looked down at the man's shirt front, his mouth dropped open. There were at least six more holes in the dope peddler. He was relieved. Dude could not possibly have pumped that many bullets into him even if he had been using two guns. Karwowski was, oddly enough, wearing no shoes.

Lew Case tapped Quinncannon on the shoulder and motioned him across the street, where only a few people were milling about.

As they walked past a dark Chevrolet, the lieutenant happened to glance in at the driver.

Dude grinned at him and said, "Hi, Frank."

The homicide captain told Dude to stay the hell where he was. Then Case and the narcotics lieutenant walked to the front of the car, leaned against the fender, and lit cigarettes.

"What happened, Lew?" Frank asked.

"Smart-ass sitting there goddamn near got himself and two of my best men killed tonight. I'm going to book that brainless bastard even if I have to charge him with moperly with intent to gawk." The six-foot-seven police captain was getting angrier by the minute.

"Ease off, Lew. Did you know that the girl Karwowski killed tonight was his girl?" Frank said in a whisper. "They were going to be married in a few weeks, according to Maude Fallon."

Lew Case stared down at his shoes and didn't say any-

thing for several moments. Then he looked at Frank and said quietly, "How the goddamn hell am I supposed to know something like that?" Then he admonished himself. "I guess that knowing who he is, I should have figured he thought he had good reason to be here."

"You still haven't told me what happened, Lew," Frank said.

"Well," the captain began, "my two men were parked across the street and a little ways down, watching the hotel. Apparently my men didn't see Brennan, and Brennan didn't see them. My boys saw Karwowski leave the hotel and head their way. They let him walk past the squad car four or five steps so they could have a good drop on him, then got out and started to follow him. Just a second before my people were going to halt Karwowski, Brennan comes hot-footing across the street waving a .45 and hollering Karwowski's name. At that distance my men didn't know who the hell he was or what he was going to do, so they took a shot at him and, luckily for Brennan, missed. Brennan had sense enough to drop to the street and stay there. Well, in that split second, Karwowski had just enough time to pull a revolver and turn and aim at my men. Just thank God they were a hell of a lot faster than he was."

"Yeah, I saw." Frank grinned.

"First thing I did when I arrived was to have a look at the heels of Karwowski's shoes," Case said.

"Find anything?" Frank asked.

"Yeah," the homicide captain said. "Fragments of glass were embedded in the heel of his left shoe. I sent the shoes down to the lab for a matchup with the broken pieces of that syringe Wilmette homicide sent over."

"They'll match!" Quinncannon said confidently.

"You can tell Brennan he can go now. He can pick up his gun tomorrow morning at property," Case said.

"Thanks, Lew. Do me a favor?"

"Shoot."

"Don't let the papers know why we wanted Karwowski yet. Just tell them that he was wanted on an investiga-

tion involving narcotics and when they stopped him for questioning he opened fire. Dude has had enough trouble for one night."

"Will do," Case said, nodding his head. "See you around, Frank."

"Good night, Lew, and thanks."

The captain started back across the street, and Frank walked back and said to Dude, "Let's go get a drink."

"Follow me, Frank," Dude said. "I'm staying at the Lake Shore Towers for now."

When the two men were comfortably seated in a booth in the cocktail lounge waiting for their drinks and a sandwich that Dude had ordered at Frank's insistence, Frank looked at his friend. Dude's face was pale and drawn. "You've had a pretty rough time of it haven't you, buddy?"

"Uh-huh," he said, sounding defeated. "And the roughest yet to come. Facing Kimmie, and . . . burying Jackie."

"Call Bea and have her fly back tomorrow, Dude."

"No."

"Why not?"

"For one thing, Mike is still out, somewhere."

"I'll have my men guard her."

"Just like you did Jackie?" he asked bitterly.

"That's not fair, Dude."

"I'm sorry Frank, I know it wasn't."

When the waitress brought Dude the sandwich he picked at it for a while, then finally set it aside.

"I want you to come home with me, Dude."

"No."

"We have plenty of room, and Norma hasn't seen you in a long time."

"No."

"She can fix you some eggs or something."

"No."

"All right Dude. But at least promise me you will go on upstairs and try to get some sleep?"

"I will. Frank? Thanks."

Chapter 13

When Dude awoke, his ears were ringing and his mouth was dry. He started to rise, but the pictures of the squad cars, the gray-and-black hearse, the detectives with their unnatural sounding voices, the hospital room, Jackie's still white face, his kiss on her cold lips, tumbled over and over in his mind. He dropped back onto the bed and wept for Jackie . . . and for Kimmie . . . and for himself.

When the tears were spent, sorrow gradually turned to a deep and hollow loneliness and a numbness of mind and body crept over him, allowing him to go on. He got up, showered, shaved, dressed, and went down to the hotel lobby. It was only six-thirty. He bought the morning papers and went into the coffee shop, hoping he would be able to eat something. It was going to be a long day. Fortunately the papers had not yet connected the murder of Jackie and the shooting of Rudy. Probably they never would. Neither story was on the front pages. The banner line of the *Examiner* read:

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENEWS PROBE OF BRANNIGAN FUND

Krebs was quoted as saying that additional evidence concerning the contingency fund had been uncovered and that his office would make a full investigation. The balance of the story rehashed what had already been covered when the story first broke.

The story concerning Jackie's death appeared on page seventeen and was sketchy at best.

HOSPITAL PATIENT SLAIN IN WILMETTE

Jacqueline Lee Devereaux, age 26, and a patient at the Parkway Convalescent Home in suburban Wilmette was found dead in her room early yesterday evening, an apparent victim of an unknown assailant.

According to Dr. Benjamin Kessell, the director of the private hospital, Miss Devereaux died as a result of an injection of cyanide directly into her heart.

Wilmette Police Chief Colin Barry stated that his department could find no motive for the senseless killing, and he believes it to be the work of a psychopath.

There were no substantial clues at the scene of the crime, and no witnesses who saw the killer entering or leaving the hospital.

The story of the gunning down of Karwowski barely made the morning editions, and whoever filed the story obviously was pressed for time.

POLICE KILL DOPE-SELLER IN FURIOUS GUN BATTLE

Shortly after midnight, detectives from the Narcotics Division and the Homicide-Vice Division of the Chicago Police Department engaged in a wild shoot-out on the corner of Loomis and Madison Streets, with a known narcotics trafficker.

Rudolph Karwowski, 32, of 817 West Ogden Avenue opened fire on the officers when they attempted to question him regarding his alleged narcotics activities. He was brought down by a hail of bullets and killed instantly.

No police officers were injured in the melee.

Dude finished his breakfast, and went to the hotel desk. He told the clerk on duty that he would no longer need the hotel car, gave him the deposit receipt, and told him to apply the amount toward his bill, then asked him to have the Packard brought around.

While he waited for the car he phoned Maude.

"Are you all right, Dude?" she asked, sounding tired.

"I'm okay. Have you told Kimmie yet?"

"Yes. Last night. The poor little thing cried herself to sleep and woke up several times during the night. She keeps asking for you, Dude. When can you come over?"

"I'll be there in fifteen minutes," he said, then hung up.

When he arrived at the apartment he knocked first, then let himself in with his key.

The little girl was sitting beside Maude, drawing pictures with her crayons in a large art tablet. When she saw him, she ran to his outstretched arms and began to cry.

"The angels took Mommy to heaven, Dude."

There was a hard lump in his throat and he could not answer. After a few moments, he managed to speak quietly to the child. For almost an hour, he comforted her, and finally she fell asleep in his arms.

Maude put the child to bed, then returned to the living room, and she and Dude discussed Kimmie's uncertain future.

"What do we do now?" Maude asked.

"I don't know. Any suggestions?"

"Does Jackie have any relatives in Ohio?"

"A drunken stepfather who might be dead by now for all I know. That's all."

Maude shook her head, then said, "In any event, I'll keep her with me until we figure something permanent."

"I'll adopt her if they'll let me," Dude said. "And if they won't I'll just keep her anyway. Then, in a way, Jackie will always be near me."

"I'm so sorry, Dude." Maude wiped her eyes. "Why does God let these things happen?"

"They happen," Dude said wearily. "Maude? Things are going to be pretty rough on me for the next couple of

days, and I won't have much time to spend with Kimmie. I don't want her brooding around this apartment. Call the airport and reserve seats on the early afternoon flight to Miami. With Bea, Lynn, and Lynn's kids down there they won't give her time to get lonesome. Especially since the twins are Kimmie's age."

"That would be the best thing to do for now," Maude said. "After I make the reservations, I'll call Lynn."

Dude awakened the sleeping child and told her that she and Aunt Maude were going on a vacation to Miami and that she would be able to go swimming every day. Then he told her she was going to ride in a great big airplane, and wouldn't that be fun? Kimmie tried to appear excited, but clearly her little heart was not in it.

Before he left, he gave Maude the five hundred dollars Frank had returned to him the previous evening and told her that he would meet them at the airport at noon.

The little girl cried when he left.

On the drive over to the ward headquarters, he thought how it seemed that all he had done for the past several days was go to wakes and funerals, and see people off to Miami. Then he thought of Mike and wondered if he had left the city for good.

Marge O'Banion was sitting at Bea's desk, typing, when Dude entered the office. He nodded to her, then went to his desk and called John O'Keefe.

"Dudel!" the funeral director said. "My god, I'm sorry. Dr. Kessell phoned me last night and told me all about it."

"Thanks, John. What arrangements have you made?"

"She'll be waked tonight after six, tomorrow, and Requiem Mass at St. Brendan's Thursday morning at nine-thirty. Interment at Woodbine if that's all right with you."

"That's fine, John. Do me a favor, though. I want the casket closed," Dude said, not just because he didn't want to see her waxlike and unreal, but he remembered once seeing a full autopsy and he didn't want to have any gruesome thoughts of how she might have looked on the dissection table at Cook County Hospital.

"I understand, Dude," O'Keefe said gently. "I hope you don't mind, but I took the liberty of ordering a blanket of white orchids for the casket from you."

"You are very kind, John, thanks. I'll be over at six," Dude said despondently and hung up.

Marge smiled at him and said, "You sure have a busy ward, Dude."

"It just seems that way whenever there is an upcoming election," he said. He didn't mention Jackie because he thought Marge probably didn't know about her. "Any calls?"

"Bill Latham called and wants you to call him back, ditto for Frank Quinncannon. Your dad was here a few minutes ago but went next door for coffee," she said.

He nodded, picked up the phone, and called the chief building inspector first. "Bill? Dude Brennan. What's up, partner?"

"Your dad came into the office yesterday and quit. No reason. Nothing. I tried to get you all day, but no one answered."

Dude thought a moment, then said, "I'll be talking to him in a few minutes, Bill; I'll see if I can find out what's wrong. I'll call you back." Frank Quinncannon wasn't in his office but was expected back, so Dude left his name and number.

Paddy Brennan walked into the office and sat down in the chair opposite his son. He said, "I went to Mr. Latham's office yesterday morning and quit."

"Do you want to tell me why?"

"I think you know why, son."

"No. Tell me."

"I attended the ward meeting the other night, as you know."

"So?"

"I can't do those things," the elder Brennan said indignantly. "Buying people's votes and everything. Your precinct captain Billy Warren told me that on election day we would have premarked ballots and would give them to the bums to take into the polls. Then when they

were given the official ballot by the election officials, they'd go into the booth and switch ballots, cast the marked one, and return the blank one to us and collect fifty cents. If that's what goes on, I want no part of it. I have a conscience."

Dude laughed nastily. He leaned over his desk toward his father, eyes narrowed. "You have a conscience? That's a laugh! Where the hell was it the night you left me and Ma to run off with that goddamn whore of yours? Where was it when I couldn't go to college? For that matter, where the hell were *you*? Don't give me any bullshit about conscience. You lost that years ago in the bottom of a whiskey bottle!" He paused to light a cigarette, then continued, "Long as you have lived in this town and you never heard of ballot switching? You're a goddamn liar!"

"I may have done a lot of wrong things in my life, but I won't break the law just so you can be the next mayor," Paddy said, got up abruptly, and left the office.

Marge was embarrassed at having overheard. In a way, though, she had to agree with Dude. Chicago was notorious for shennanigans on election day, and everyone just winked and looked the other way. Only a rube didn't know what was happening, and Paddy Brennan was no rube.

Dude, still angry, called Latham, told him Paddy Brennan would not be returning to the job, but gave no reason. He promised to send another man as a replacement within a few days.

When Frank Quinncannon called a few minutes later Dude thought he detected worry in his voice. "What's the matter, Frank?"

"Do you know Kenny Talley, Dude?"

"I don't think so, why?"

"I think I pulled a real boner this morning."

"Quit talking in riddles, Frank, what happened?"

"Kenny Talley is an assistant attorney general for Krebs. He and I went to high school together. I ran into him this morning in the coffee shop in the Morrison and we started swapping lies. He asked me if I knew Bea, and

from the way he was talking I thought he had dated her at one time or another or at least knew her, so when he asked me where she was I didn't think anything of it and told him that she was in Miami, and probably staying at Danker's. We talked a while longer, then he finally leveled with me. He's working on that Brannigan thing and Krebs wants a deposition from her."

"What the hell for?"

"Said he couldn't tell me, that it was confidential."

"Are they going to go to Miami to talk to her?"

"I don't think so. I told him that she would only be down there for a few days, so I think they will wait until she comes back."

Dude was silent for a few moments, then said, "It doesn't make sense Frank; Bea never worked in Brannigan's office. Crap! I know now. Probably Krebs knows about us meeting at the Richmond-Carlton and setting up that story so Brannigan could cover his stealing from the contingency fund. I got to get hold of Whalen right away, Frank—talk to you later."

The mayor was on another line when Dude called, and he had to wait several minutes. It was a little after eleven and he knew he had to leave soon if he wanted to get out to the airport by noon.

"Whalen here," the city boss thundered in the committeeman's ear.

"Dude. I think we better get together this afternoon. It's about the Brannigan thing. I don't want to talk over the phone, so how about lunch—say, quarter of two at your table in the Morrison?"

"Fine. I have something to tell you about it, too. See you around two," he boomed, then hung up.

When Dude, Maude and Kimmie met at the terminal, Kimmie's spirits were much higher. Maude had bought the little girl a stuffed panda almost as tall as she was, and the child had to drag it on the floor as she raced the few feet to meet him.

"Did you get tickets?" he asked Maude.

"Yes," she replied. "Now I don't know what we are supposed to do for the next half hour."

"How about a chocolate soda?" he asked Kimmie.

"Yes, yes," she squealed, and Dude picked her up and put her and the panda on his shoulder and they all paraded into the airport restaurant.

All three had sodas. Dude told Maude that Krebs wanted to take a deposition from Bea. "I want you to tell her to stay there until I find out what's going on."

The terminal loudspeaker announced that the Miami flight was ready for boarding at gate two. He boarded the plane with them, and when they were seated, with Kimmie occupying the seat next to the window, he kissed the little girl good-bye and shook hands with Maude.

He watched the plane taxi out to the runway and knew that he was going to miss the child. By God, somehow he was going to adopt her. He felt that Kimmie was his own daughter and no one was ever going to take her away from him.

He knew Jackie would have wanted it that way.

Whalen was alone at his table sipping a Manhattan when Dude walked up. "Sit down, son," the mayor said. "I'll get you a drink." He motioned to Ralph who was standing nearby as he always was when His Honor was dining there.

"Jim, Frank Quinncannon called me this morning and said he ran into one of Krebs's men and found out that they're looking for Bea to take her deposition. The only reason I can figure is that they know somehow what went on last week at the Richmond-Carlton with Brannigan," Dude informed him.

"When are they going to talk to her?" Whalen asked.

"They can't unless they want to go down to Miami," Dude said, smiling. "I sent her down there yesterday and told her to stay there until I found out where Mike disappeared to."

The waiter served Dude his drink, then took up his

position, waiting till the mayor was prepared to order lunch.

"The bastards are busy," the city leader said. "Bob Gavin called this morning and said they wanted to take his deposition, too."

"What did they want, did he say?" Dude asked.

"They wouldn't tell him, so he told them that if they wanted to know anything to serve him with a subpoena. I suppose they will."

"That proves it," Dude said. "Someone tipped them off. Do you think it could have been Brannigan?"

"I doubt it, Dude," Whalen said thoughtfully, "more likely that bitch he's been shacking with."

"How about Danny and Tom? Has anyone from Krebs's office contacted them yet?"

"No. I talked to them after Gavin called."

"What do you think they are up to?" Dude asked the mayor.

"That's obvious!" Whalen replied, somewhat irritably. "They want testimony from Gavin and Bea placing me, you, Danny, and Tom Heeney in that frigging hotel room. Then they will try for conspiracy indictments against us."

"Brannigan would have to cooperate," Dude said.

"He will. He won't have any choice," Whalen said.

The mayor ordered lunch for them and they ate in silence. When they finished, Whalen ordered brandy, which was unusual. When Ralph brought the drinks, Whalen leaned back in his chair and lit up a long cigar. "I read about that girl Jackie in the morning paper. I'm sorry, son."

Dude had been wondering when the fat bastard would get around to saying something about Jackie's death. Dude thought, The sonofabitch isn't one bit sorry. "Yeah! Now you won't have to worry about her embarrassing you any more!"

"Don't get snotty with me!" Whalen said viciously.

"Go to hell, fat boy!" Dude said loudly enough for several people seated near them to hear. Then he got up and stalked out of the dining room.

The mayor was smiling as he watched the ward leader walking out and thought: You are going down now, son, just like Brannigan. You have been asking for it for a long time now.

By the time he reached his car, Dude knew he had made a serious mistake, sounding off like that. This was the wrong time to alienate Whalen. If they were to survive what the attorney general had in store for them, they would have to stick together.

He went to his office, and found several of his precinct captains there to pick up their expense money for the voter registration. He took a stack of envelopes from Marge's desk and began handing them out. When he had finished and the office was cleared he put in a call to Captain Haley, and Dude said, "I think it's time we had another little party in the ward, Captain."

"That sounds fine," Haley said. "What did you have in mind?"

"Those eighteen places you missed last time are back in full swing again. They won't be expecting any visitors this soon after the last raid, so if you can manage it today would be a perfect time to hit them."

"That's short notice," the captain said. "But I'll see if I can round up some men and at least hit some of them before the day is over. Thanks, Dude. I'll be in touch with you later."

Dude replaced the receiver on the hook and thought, Just a small reminder, Mr. Conforti, that I haven't forgotten that you sat by and did nothing while that dirty little animal of yours killed my Jackie. From now on, every time you open one of your places Haley is going to be there to close it down. Not being the least bit concerned about Conforti and his two hired killers, or what they might do to him for engineering more arrests of his men, Dude settled down for the rest of the afternoon attending to ward matters.

At four-thirty he sent Marge home by cab. He stayed on at the office until almost six o'clock hoping Captain Haley would call. He didn't.

It was dark when Dude locked the office for the night and climbed into the Packard. The biting wind chilled him to the bone. He could not recall a cold spell as severe since he was a boy.

Reluctantly, he drove south to keep another vigil at O'Keefe's.

At precisely the same time Dude parked his Packard in front of the funeral home, Officer Vincent Geer brought his patrol car to a halt behind the Chevrolet parked near the lagoon in Garfield Park. It had been sitting there since Sunday evening, despite three parking citations the patrolman had placed under the windshield wiper. His shift sergeant had told him at roll call that the car had been there long enough, to have it towed to the pound. As a matter of routine before calling the wrecker, Officer Geer radioed the dispatcher and gave him the license number of the car and requested that the auto theft squad check it out and call him back. Ten minutes later the dispatcher told him that the car was stolen and to stand by for the detectives from the auto theft division.

The detectives arrived, and jimmied open the trunk of the Chevrolet. They found Mike's mutilated body, and called homicide-vice, and the coroner's office. All Mike's personal effects, wallet, keys, cigarettes, and loose change had been removed from his pockets, and that, coupled with the fact that most of his face had been blown off made immediate identification impossible. His body was sent to the morgue where his fingerprints would be taken for identification. Missing persons would also be notified.

Office Geer was despondent. He knew that he would be suspended for not checking out the car on Sunday evening. He thought of his sergeant and his shift commander, and decided that both of them were bastards.

Frank and Norma Quinnecannon were on their way to the funeral home and Frank was listening to the conversations about the body between the dispatcher and the men from homicide. Acting on a hunch, he picked up the

microphone to the two-way radio, identified himself, and asked the dispatcher to get him a physical description of the victim. When he received the information he turned to his wife and said matter-of-factly, "It's Mike Riordan."

"That's terrible, Frank. What are you going to tell Dude?" she asked.

"Nothing. I don't want you to say anything, either. When we leave O'Keefe's I'll stop by the morgue just to make sure," he said, then called the dispatcher back and told him to have someone from the homicide unit meet him at the morgue at eight-thirty.

Dude had been sitting alone, staring at the casket for almost an hour and a half. The only visitor had been Father Liam Devlin who came early, said the Rosary, spoke to Dude for two or three minutes, then departed. When he saw the Quinncannons, Dude nodded, and watched as they went to the orchid-draped casket and knelt down to say a prayer.

Then Norma Quinncannon came to Dude and said, "It's been a long time since I last saw you, Dude, and then it has to be at a time like this."

"I know," he said. "Frank has been asking me over for weeks, but I just never got around to it."

"How are you feeling, buddy?" Frank asked, noticing that his friend looked much worse than he had the night before.

"All right," Dude said listlessly. "It was rough as hell seeing that little girl today. I sent her and Maude down to join Lynn and Bea this afternoon. I figured that Lynn's kids would keep Kimmie busy and help take her mind off it."

Frank nodded. "Are you still checked in at the Towers?"

"Un-huh. Why?"

"I think you should stay there for a few days."

"Why?"

"Conforti's two illegitimate sons may plan to visit you at your apartment. By seven tonight, Haley hit twelve spots

in your ward, and in one place they collared four of the Guinea's bagmen."

"I had a hunch Haley would do okay," Dude said.

"You mean you knew?" the detective asked, astonished.

"Sure," Dude said. "I told Haley which places to raid."

"For God's sake, Dude! Do you have any idea what you're doing?" Quinncannon asked, almost shouting.

"Yes. Paying him back for that," Dude said softly, pointing to the coffin.

"He'll have you killed for this, Dude!"

"Let him try!"

"Whether you like it or not, I'm going to have my men on you day and night from now on!" A sense of desperate frustration was in his voice. He felt he should caution his friend by telling him about Mike, but Dude would know soon enough.

"Quit worrying, Frank," Dude said quietly. "Conforti isn't foolish enough to try anything so obvious. If anything happens to me, everyone would know he was behind it and then there would be hell to pay."

"I'm still going to have my men watch you," the detective said, not convinced by the committeeman's logic.

"Go ahead if you want, Frank, but it's a waste of time and manpower."

"Let me worry about that," he replied. "Will you be all right? I have to stop downtown in a few minutes, so we have to be going. I'll call you in the morning or stop by the coffee shop and have breakfast with you."

"I'll meet you about eight-thirty," Dude said.

"Why don't you come stay with us, Dude?" Norma asked.

"Thanks, Norma, but I'll be fine."

Alone again in the still chapel, Dude slumped down in an armchair and resumed staring at the casket. He dozed off for a few minutes and was awakened by a hand gently shaking his shoulder. When he opened his eyes, Bea was standing there looking down at him.

"Hi, Princess," he said softly, and was glad she had come back.

Frank Quinncannon hated the trips he had to make to the dreary little gray-stone building behind the County Hospital. The antiseptic odor of the green-tiled room, with its neat rows of refrigerator doors and the sweetly sickening smell of formaldehyde, depressed him, and he always concluded his business as quickly as possible.

He flashed his gold star and asked the attendant seated at the old worn desk if the men from homicide had arrived. The man nodded, and pointed to the double doors that led to the autopsy room.

Lieutenant Maggiore, Sergeant Pritchard, and two fingerprint officers were standing beside the white porcelain table peering at the naked body lying there in the harsh white glare of ten one-hundred-watt lightbulbs suspended over the table. After the men greeted each other, Lieutenant Maggiore turned to Quinncannon and asked, "Ever seen him before, Frank?"

Quinncannon looked down at what was left of Mike, then turned his head away. He had seen many corpses in his long career, but had never quite become used to the sight of death. Then in a low voice he answered, "Yeah. Name's Michael Riordan; he was Dude Brennan's chauffeur."

"I don't know how you can identify that mush," Maggiore said, pointing to the mass that was once a face.

"I knew him, Nick," Frank said.

"Any ideas?" Maggiore asked.

"He was going to be a state's witness against Conforti," Frank said.

The homicide lieutenant whistled softly. "That figures. The way he was worked over. We don't have a single lead, either. No prints, no weapons, not a damn thing. I'll have to notify Brannigan's office; maybe they can shed some light on this."

"When is the m.e. going to do the post on him?" Frank asked.

"Around eight in the morning, I think," Maggiore replied.

"Keep me informed on your progress, will you, Nick?" he asked.

"Will do, Frank," the homicide lieutenant said. Quinn-cannon pushed his way through the white double doors and when he was outside in the small courtyard, he paused and took a deep breath, trying to rid his nostrils of the scent of chemicals and death, but knew that the smell would linger with him for several hours.

He climbed into the squad car next to his waiting wife, and drove toward home, wondering how soon it would be before he would be returning to the little building again to look down at the body of his friend Dude Brennan. He was convinced now that the committeeman would not escape the fate that had befallen Mike.

"Was it Mike?" Norma asked.

"Yes."

"They'll kill Dude, won't they," Norma Quinncannon stated rather than asked.

"I'm afraid so, honey," her husband answered gloomily.

Dude drove Bea back to the Towers with him and they had a light supper in the restaurant.

"You shouldn't have come back, Princess. Mike is still running around somewhere and I really don't know what he's apt to do," Dude said, sounding very tired.

"I know," she replied. "But I had to be with you now."

"I'm going to get you a room here for the night, then I want you on the first plane back to Miami tomorrow. We can't afford to have Krebs's men catch up with you just yet."

"We'll see tomorrow, Dude," she said softly.

After a mild argument with the desk clerk, he secured a room just down the hall from his for his secretary, and they went up in the elevator together, Dude carrying her lone suitcase.

Outside the door to her room, Dude handed her the key and said good night. Before he could turn to leave, she was in his arms, holding him tightly. He kissed her cheek lightly, and could barely detect the faint aroma of her

jasmine perfume. She drew back, smiled up at him, and said good night in barely a whisper.

Alone in his room, Dude removed his suit coat, vest and tie, and sat down on the edge of the bed and rubbed his bloodshot eyes. It had been a long day. After smoking several cigarettes, he took off his wristwatch and ring and placed them on the night table and was about to remove his shoes, when he heard the light knock on the door.

She was standing in the doorway in a powder-blue negligee, and before he could utter a protest, she glided past him swiftly and stood in the center of the room and said quietly, "Turn out the lights."

Outside the night wind howled, and the waves from the lake dashed violently against the breakwater and it began to turn colder.

She would not tell him she was carrying his child.

Chapter 14

Andrew Krebs kept a tight ring of security around his investigation of Brannigan and his staff. The side investigation into the possibility of securing enough evidence to present to a grand jury so that they might hand down indictments against Whalen, Brennan, Maher, and Heeney for criminal conspiracy was a closely guarded secret.

The attorney general, in order to maintain that secrecy, kept interviews and depositions to a minimum. He realized it had been an error to tip their hand to Gavin. Since the damage was done, he had decided to hold off interviewing any other key witnesses, hoping that when they were summoned before the grand jury, their testimony at that time would be sufficient.

Brannigan's phone call to Krebs early that morning came as a total surprise to the attorney general. Although the state's attorney would not divulge the reasons for requesting an appointment with him, Krebs was certain that he had some hot information and was going to try to trade it off for a promise to drop the investigation. In all probability what Brannigan had must have some connection with the brutal murder of Brennan's chauffeur.

At nine-thirty, Brannigan and Powell were seated in the attorney general's office. The state's attorney handed Krebs the thick transcript of Mike Riordan's deposition, taken on Sunday afternoon. Brannigan was thankful that he had made Riordan wait until the testimony had been typed up and had him sign it. The statements could now be used in court.

It took the attorney general over an hour to read the entire transcript, and when he finished he set it down on his desk.

"On the strength of the testimony I find here, it would appear that we could get some indictments, but building a solid case to stand up at a trial solely on the words of a dead man—frankly I'm not so sure."

Brannigan snapped, "There's a solid connection between Brennan and Conforti."

"And it's obvious that's the reason Riordan was murdered," Powell chimed in.

"Granted," the attorney general said. "But again we're relying on unsubstantiated allegations made by a man who will not be available for cross-examination."

"Somewhere in Brennan's office there must be some records he kept for his own use, a list that shows when payoffs were made and to whom, and the amounts involved," Brannigan said. "Why don't you issue a subpoena *duces tecum* and see what you come up with?"

"It's quite a long shot," Krebs said, "and if we don't come up with anything, we will have tipped our hand to Brennan."

"Mr. Krebs," Brannigan began, "I am going to be quite honest with you. The real reason I came here today was to ask you to drop your investigation."

"I figured as much," the attorney general replied.

"In return," the state's attorney said, "I am prepared to give testimony to the fact that Whalen and Brennan forced me to lie about the true disposition of the money from my contingency fund. I am in a position now to show you and your men the correct version of the expenditures, thus proving my innocence."

Krebs stared at the state's attorney, tapping his pencil idly on Mike's deposition, then reluctantly said, "Mr. Brannigan, you don't have a thing to offer. Any testimony concerning a conspiracy with Mayor Whalen and Mr. Brennan I can get from you simply by summoning you before the grand jury. And as far as explaining what happened to the money, I'm afraid you're too late."

"What do you mean?"

The attorney general rose, walked over to one of his file cabinets, and withdrew a thick folder. He returned to his desk and handed it to the state's attorney. It was the transcript of Carol Logan's deposition.

Brannigan read several pages of the deposition, then threw it back on the desk. "My God, Krebs!" he pleaded. "You can't do this to me!"

"I'm afraid I have no choice," the attorney general replied.

"If I confess to everything, can you leave her out of it?"

"She would be a part of the confession, wouldn't she?"

"My wife isn't well. This will kill her."

The attorney general disliked the role he had to play. It was an ugly thing to have to ruin a man publicly. Brannigan was looking for a deal. Well, he would offer him one.

"Mr. Brannigan, if you are serious about making a confession, I will try to help you," Krebs said quietly. "Admitting you diverted funds for your own personal use would be sufficient. How you spent the money doesn't necessarily have to be brought to light. Overshadowing this will be your statement as to the conspiracy involving Whalen, Brennan, Heeney, and Maher."

"On a plea of guilty could you recommend probation?" Brannigan asked.

"I would recommend it, yes. However, I cannot guarantee that you will not get some time," Krebs said.

"How much time?"

"Two to five years at most."

"And without a confession?"

"Ten years, minimum, no probation."

"What about Powell?"

"We don't have a case against him."

"Good. When do you want my statement?"

"Now is as good a time as any, Mr. Brannigan. I'll get a court reporter."

Between Brannigan's confession, Mike's deposition, and Carol Logan's story, the attorney general knew beyond a

300

shadow of a doubt that Whalen and his crowd were through.

POLITICIAN'S BODYGUARD SLAIN IN GANGLAND-STYLE KILLING

Dude stared at the bold headlines of the *Examiner*, then glanced down and saw his picture and one of Mike, and one of the homicide men removing Mike's body from the trunk of the stolen Chevrolet.

He took Bea by the hand and steered her out of the lobby into the hotel's coffee shop. After he read the lead story, he handed the newspaper to her without comment.

When she finished reading she said, "Poor Mike. I feel it's my fault."

Dude shook his head. "If anyone is to blame, it's me. I saw it coming. He wanted to hurt me because he was in love with you. He was a pretty lonely man."

"Dude," she said softly, "I don't think he meant to rape me after all."

"I never really believed he did," Dude answered.

"Dude? Is Conforti going to be going after you now?" she asked cautiously.

"I don't give a damn if he is."

"Sooner or later Krebs is going to have you up before the grand jury over the Brannigan thing, and you know he won't stop there. He'll try to link you with Conforti," she said.

"Bea," he said, changing the subject, "I want you to fly back to Miami this afternoon."

"If that's what you want," she said softly.

He nodded, and said, "I'll join you down there at the end of the week."

She looked questioningly at him. "What about the election campaign?"

"I'm going to pull out," he answered. "Jackie's dead, Mike's dead, Sully's dead—all because of me. In some way I'm going to make it up to them."

"What are you going to do?" she asked fearfully.

"Ask Krebs for immunity from prosecution, then hand him Conforti's head on a silver platter," he said, staring at the tablecloth.

"You can't!" she pleaded. "Come with me to Miami. Don't stay here. Conforti will kill you like he did Mike."

He looked into her eyes for a long time then said quietly, "I have to, Princess."

She put her hand over his. "We could start a whole new life together in Miami. I know you don't love me, but I would make you a good wife. . . . Please?"

He resumed staring at the tablecloth, and after a few moments said, "That sure as hell would be a rotten thing to do to you, Princess."

"I love you so much, Dude. Please don't do this." She was on the verge of telling him about the baby when Frank Quinnecannon entered the restaurant and came to their table.

"Hi, Bea," he said. Then to Dude: "How you doing, partner?"

"Sit down, Frank. Did you know about Mike?"

"Yeah, last night. I would have told you but I thought you had about enough for one night," the detective said.

Dude took out his checkbook and wrote a check for fifteen hundred dollars payable to John O'Keefe, then handed it to Frank, saying, "Bury Mike for me, will you?"

"Sure," he said, taking the check, then as he was about to say something, Bea turned to him and said, "Frank, Dude is going to go to Krebs and try to get Conforti indicted. Don't let him do it."

"Jesus Christ! You crazy sonofabitch!" Frank said angrily. "There's already rumors afoot that the wop has a contract out on you. If you don't get the hell out of town you won't live long enough to see a grand jury!"

"Quit racing your motor, Frank. Once I testify he'll have to think twice before doing anything to me," Dude said.

"Bullshit!" Frank said acidly. "Sorry, Bea, I don't usually cuss in front of women."

"Look," Dude said, "my mind is made up and nothing either of you say is going to change it."

"Dude, just why the hell don't you get out of town and leave well enough alone?" Quinncannon pleaded.

"No dice, Frank," he said, then motioned to the waitress so they could order.

"I'm not going back to Miami unless you go with me," Bea said stubbornly.

"You'll go even if I have to put you on the goddamn plane bodily!" he said sharply.

He didn't have to. She left that afternoon, despairing that she would ever see him alive again.

Chapter 15

The bailiff held a Bible up to Dude, then said, "Please place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right hand." Dude did as he was instructed, then the bailiff continued. "Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give in the cause pending here today shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?"

"I do."

"Please be seated."

Andrew Krebs rose from the table and walked to where Dude was seated, smiled warmly at him, and began his questioning. "Please state your full name and address for the record."

"Patrick Michael Brennan. Fifteen ninety-one West Madison Street, Cook County, Chicago, Illinois."

"What is your occupation Mr. Brennan?"

"I am the fourth ward Democratic ward committeeman."

"Are you actively seeking election as the alderman of the fourth ward?"

"I was, but I have withdrawn my name as an active candidate and have formally resigned from the race."

"Mr. Brennan, are you appearing voluntarily before this grand jury?"

"I am."

"Is it your understanding that you will be immune from any and all prosecution resulting from any self-incriminating testimony given here today?"

"It is."

"Mr. Brennan, do you know Antonio Rocco Conforti?"

"I do."

"Would you please tell us in your own words the circumstances under which you first became acquainted with him?"

"I first met him several years ago when I was ward secretary for the late Alderman Hanrahan. Conforti owns the Royale Hotel where I live, next door to the ward office on Madison Street. But at the time I first met him I had an apartment on Aberdeen Avenue. Hanrahan took me out one night to Conforti's Forest Park headquarters and introduced me to him. Conforti paid Hanrahan ten percent of the profits from the book in the Royale and was allowed to operate in the ward. The local police precinct house got their share too. We would be told when raids were to be conducted, then pass the information along to Tony Conforti. When Tim Hanrahan died and I became the ward committeeman I got in deeper."

"When you say deeper, Mr. Brennan, could you please be a bit more specific?"

"Well, you could say that in effect I became a bagman for Conforti."

"Please explain to the jury what a bagman is?"

"A bagman is a person who is a go-between in illegal money transactions. In other words, I would take payoff money from one person and transport it to another."

"Please give the jurors an example of how this operation is usually conducted."

"Well, for example. Gangster A would give me, say, ten thousand dollars in cash to give to judge B to fix a court case involving defendant C. Or, business man A would give me ten thousand dollars to deliver to purchaser B to rig the bidding in favor of awarding pending contracts involving A's business firm."

"Prior to coming here to testify today, Mr. Brennan, you came to my office with certain personal records you kept pertaining to illegal payoffs. Do you have those records with you today?"

"I have."

"Will you please read into the record your account of the illegal transactions in which you were an active participant, stating who gave you money, for what purpose, and to whom the money was delivered? Before you start, how far back do your records go?"

"I began keeping a detailed account only in January of this year. Do you want me to start now?"

"Please."

"January tenth, five thousand dollars from Conforti for Judge Emmett Gorman to throw out an armed robbery charge against Leo Wolfe. January nineteenth, five thousand dollars from Conforti to Gorman again, this time to fix an attempted murder charge against Armondo Labriola. March twelfth, ten thousand dollars from Conforti to me for use in the April primaries."

"Excuse me, Mr. Brennan, but how much was your cut in these illicit transactions?"

"That usually depended on who the money was going to. Emmett Gorman and I usually split the take fifty-fifty. Ward Donohue would never part with more than ten percent of the bribes he got. All campaign money I kept myself for use in the ward."

"I see. Please continue, Mr. Brennan."

Dude detailed several more of the illicit payoffs, which involved five judges, three assistant state's attorneys, the sheriff and several assorted police officials, and concluded with the last two bribes he had received—the one hundred thousand from Teichner and the ten thousand for the current election.

"Mr. Brennan, was any third party ever present when you received the money in these transactions?"

"Yes. Mike Riordan, my former chauffeur. He was with me and knew of the deals I have just testified to."

"Is Mike Riordan the same Michael Riordan who was found murdered the other day?"

"It is."

"I now show you a copy of a transcript of a deposition made by Michael Francis Riordan in the office of State

Attorney William Brannigan and ask you if you have ever seen it before?"

"Yes. I read it in your office yesterday."

Krebs directed his next remark to the judge. "At this time, Your Honor, I should like to read this deposition into the record."

The attorney general spent the next two hours reading Mike's testimony while Dude fidgeted in the witness chair. When Krebs finished, he asked. "Is it not true, Mr. Brennan, that the accounts of bribery of public officials made by you here today are now totally substantiated by the testimony of the late Michael Riordan?"

"That is correct, Mr. Krebs."

"Now, Mr. Brennan, is it not also a fact that you, Mayor James Richard Whalen, Patronage Director Daniel Vincent Maher and Corporation Counsel Thomas Leland Heeney had knowledge that State Attorney William Estes Brannigan did in fact divert monies from his contingency fund for his own personal use and that the four of you, in a suite in the Richmond-Carlton Hotel, conspired to suppress the truth and provided Mr. Brannigan with false information to present to me and my staff?"

"That is true."

"Mr. Brennan, I now show you stock certificates numbers RS 167704 through RS 167804, numbers RS 22107 through RS 22207 and RS 24040 through RS 24140 issued in the name of Fred J. O'Malley, on the Teichner Construction Company Incorporated and ask you if you voluntarily presented them to me?"

"I did."

"I now show you a bill of sale for those stock certificates, from Fred J. O'Malley to Patrick M. Brennan, dated March twenty-first of this year, and ask you if the signature on this document is yours?"

"It is, sir."

"As indicated in this bill of sale, did this transaction take place on the date shown?"

"No, it did not."

"When and under what circumstances did you negotiate this transaction?"

"A few days ago, Saturday to be exact, Mayor Whalen called me into his office and told me that there was going to be an investigation into the awarding of the subway contracts to the Teichner Construction Company, and that he owned ten thousand shares of that stock registered in his brother-in-law's name. He said that he couldn't afford to be connected with it, so he made out that phony bill of sale dated six months ago, and on Monday morning I signed it and he gave me the certificates to hold for him."

"Mr. Brennan. The bill of sale indicates that you paid Mr. O'Malley the sum of forty-four thousand five hundred dollars representing a market value of four dollars and forty-five cents per share at the time of the alleged sale. Did in fact any money exchange hands?"

"No, sir. It was agreed upon that when things cooled off, I would return the stock to Whalen and we would destroy the bill of sale."

"Was it ever intended that those certificates be transferred into your name?"

"No, it wasn't."

"Would you once again state to the jury the bribery details involving the Teichner Construction Company?"

"On August twenty-fourth of this year Mike Riordan and I went to the home of Mr. Boyd Teichner in Evans-ton. Teichner gave me an envelope containing one hundred thousand dollars to give to the city purchaser to ensure that his bid for the subway contracts would be accepted. I kept ten thousand for myself and gave the balance to Ward Donohue, the city purchaser."

"Was Mayor Whalen aware of this bribery transaction?"

"Yes, he was."

"Did Mayor Whalen receive any portion of the remaining ninety thousand dollars?"

"That I don't know, sir. You would have to ask Donohue or Whalen."

"Now, Mr. Brennan, did Mr. Ward Donohue, the city

purchaser for the city of Chicago, receive any instructions from Mayor Whalen concerning the awarding of the sub-way contracts?"

"Yes, sir."

"Please tell us, if you remember, what was said and by whom?"

"Prior to giving Donohue the payoff, I talked with Whalen and told him about the deal. He called Ward from his office and told him that the contracts were to be awarded to Teichner's outfit and to no one else. The whole thing was definitely rigged in Teichner's favor."

"Mr. Brennan, do you have any knowledge of any other bids made by other companies on those contracts?"

"Yes. Two other firms were in the bidding. The Mayhew Construction Company and the Pascal and Blevins Construction Company."

"Do you know who the low bidders were?"

"Yes. Pascal and Blevins and the Mayhew Company both submitted bids lower than Teichner's."

"Then it is a fact is it not that the highest bidder for those contracts was the Teichner Construction Company?"

"That is correct."

"Which firm was finally awarded those contracts, Mr. Brennan?"

"The Teichner Construction Company."

"Before taking up the next matter, Mr. Brennan, I must again inform you, as I did in my office yesterday, that although the state has granted you immunity from prosecution, the testimony that you will now be giving concerns national elections and illegal matters of a federal nature as well as local, and in all probability, you will be summoned before a federal grand jury to testify. I cannot in any way advise you that you will or will not be offered immunity by the United States government. In view of what I just said, do you still wish to give testimony at this hearing?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"In the last presidential election held two years ago in November, a substantial number of allegations were made

pertaining to vote fraud and vote buying. As we are all aware, none of the charges were ever proved, and the investigations launched at the time proved unsuccessful. Do you have any knowledge as to whether or not any of those charges were valid?"

"They were all valid."

"Do you know this from personal knowledge or from hearsay?"

"From personal knowledge. I directed wholesale illegal voter registrations and wholesale vote buying, fraudulent voting, and ghost voting. My ward has an exceptionally high number of transients, mostly bums and derelicts and this kind of chicanery was a way of life in the fourth ward."

"Mr. Brennan, is it not true that these illegal practices were also participated in by members of your ward organization—precinct captains and workers—were they not?"

"They were."

"To your knowledge, Mr. Brennan, was Mayor Whalen aware that these illegal practices were being engaged in by you and your people?"

"He was not only aware of them, he demanded them. If it were not for the fraud in my ward during the last election, there would be a different man sitting in the White House right now."

"Did any of the other wards in the city participate in this type of activity?"

"You had better believe it. Not one of the other forty-nine Democratic ward committeemen is innocent when it comes to rigging elections. Either you deliver your ward, and deliver it by a substantial margin, or the mayor finds himself another ward committeeman."

"Were these practices engaged in prior to your being elected ward committeeman?"

"Hell, yes. I'm sorry, Your Honor, that just slipped out."

"I understand, Mr. Brennan," the judge said, laughing. "Please continue."

"I know about at least two hundred people who voted

in the last election who have been dead and buried for ten years."

"Why haven't those names been purged from the registration books, Mr. Brennan?"

"Mr. Krebs, let's not kid one another. Every member of the board of election commissioners is a registered Democrat and either a precinct captain or ward committeeman."

"It has always been my understanding, Mr. Brennan, that on election day every precinct has poll watchers who are instructed to watch for such illegal practices. Why is it that these things are never reported?"

"In almost every instance, the poll watchers are selected by the ward committeeman. The ones they don't personally pick are usually bought off before election day."

"What about the Republican election judges in the various precincts? Surely, living in the precinct, they would have to be aware that votes are being cast for persons they know are dead?"

"They know all right. But if you will excuse the cynicism, the Republicans can be bought off quicker than the Democrats and usually at a much lower price, and especially since the crash. The Republicans don't have any patronage in the city to speak of and, as a result, most of their election judges are either out of work and on relief or have very low-paying jobs. During the times between elections a good ward committeeman goes out of his way to do favors for the Republicans in his ward. Getting them jobs and so forth. Believe me, Mr. Krebs, a smart ward committeeman does not find it too difficult to politically control his ward and produce outstanding results on election day."

"It would seem so. Mr. Brennan, you have used the terms 'vote fraud,' 'vote buying,' 'ghost voting,' 'fraudulent voting,' and 'illegal voter registrations.' Will you please explain to the jury what is meant by each one of those terms?"

Dude detailed the various types of fraud that had been perpetrated over the years in all of the elections and was

careful to stress that all of the practices were always sanctioned by Mayor Whalen. And all of his testimony was substantiated by the statements Iron Mike had given in his deposition to Brannigan, who had resigned that morning to be replaced by civil division chief, Clark Boston.

The web of evidence Dude had woven far exceeded his initial desire to have just Conforti indicted. But sooner or later all of it would have caught up with him.

His career was over.

Frank and Norma Quinncannon talked Dude into staying with them until after he testified before the grand jury and Conforti was indicted. After Jackie's funeral, they brought him back to their place and Frank picked up his things from the Lake Shore Towers. He forbade Dude to go out or contact anyone except Krebs, and the mayor was frantic, not being able to find Dude.

Whalen had learned of the heroin deal and that Frank and his men were close to making arrests of some of Conforti's key suppliers. He reasoned that Quinncannon could not have put together a case as fast as he did without inside information, and that information had to come from the ward committeeman. He was certain of it that morning when Danny Maher came bursting into his office unannounced.

"We're going to jail! We're all going to jail!" Danny mumbled as he took a chair opposite Whalen.

"What the hell are you talking about?" the mayor snapped.

"Dude!" Maher said, throwing his hands up in disgust. "Dude!"

"Goddamn it, talk sense!" Whalen shouted. "What about Dude?"

"Mort Young just called me from the bailiff's office out at Twenty-sixth Street. Dude is there right now testifying before a grand jury. He's spilling his guts about everything. Conforti, vote fraud, the works. Between him and Brannigan they have enough information to indict us all!" Maher said helplessly.

"Why wasn't I told of this sooner?" Whalen demanded.

"No one knew about it!" Maher said. "I haven't been able to get in touch with him since that girl's funeral."

Whalen got up and began pacing the floor. This was bad. Really bad. He had no choice. Dude had to be stopped. He walked to Danny and, placing a hand on his shoulder, said, "Son, I'm going to ask you to do something for me that I wouldn't ask in a hundred years if it were not for the fact that all our lives are at stake now."

Oh, oh, Danny thought, where have I heard that line before? Here it comes, the dirty work. But he said nothing.

"Now that that ungrateful bastard has betrayed us," Whalen began, "we are going to have to stick together. How would you like to be the next mayor of the city of Chicago, son?"

"What's the catch?" Maher wanted to know.

"No catch at all, son," the mayor said smoothly. "If you don't care to do as I wish, you can depend on spending the next twenty or so years of your young life behind bars."

Maher was trapped and he knew it. "All right, what do I have to do?"

"That's the spirit, son. Just a simple matter of taking a drive out to Forest Park this afternoon," Whalen said, smiling.

Frank Quinncannon had accompanied Dude to the grand-jury hearing and waited patiently in the corridor on the fifth floor in the criminal court building at Twenty-sixth and California. It was a little after seven that evening when Dude emerged from behind the locked doors, pale and haggard-looking. When he spied his friend, he winked and said, "It's all over now, partner. Conforti will pay for Jackie and Mike."

"I just hope I can keep you alive," Frank said glumly.

Darkness had descended upon the city, and the biting north wind cut through the two men as they hurried down the courthouse steps and headed north to Twenty-sixth Street.

When they reached the intersection, the light had turned to red and Frank cursed. Neither saw the LaSalle sedan parked halfway down the block on California Avenue, between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Streets, or the men inside watching them.

As they started across the street, it was already too late. The LaSalle streaked to the corner, turned west on Twenty-sixth, and when it was abreast of the two men, braked to a halt, and the three occupants of the car opened fire with blazing .38's.

The detective instinctively reached for his service revolver, but before his hand touched his coat lapel, the first of the three bullets that hit him tore a gaping hole in his forehead, killing him instantly.

Dude was grabbing for his friend when two slugs caught him in the chest, slamming him to the pavement. He managed to raise himself to one knee when the third and fourth bullets ripped his stomach and left side open. He sank down into an inky blackness, wondering why he felt no pain.

They never had a chance.

Chapter 16

Bea and Lynn had returned to the Danker's Inn shortly after three o'clock for a shopping trip to Lincoln Road in Miami Beach. They stopped at the hotel lounge for a drink. By the time they were seated, the bartender, who knew them, had their drinks prepared.

"Bea?" Lynn asked softly. "I've avoided asking you up till now, but did you say anything to Dude when you were there? I mean about the baby."

"It was the wrong time."

"I guess you're right," Lynn said, then asked, "How badly did Dude take Jackie's death?"

"It changed him, Lynn. He's not the same guy any more. What he's going to do now, I mean going before the grand jury, is just terrible. Frank and I tried every way to talk him out of it, but couldn't. It's almost as if he wants to die."

"When do you think he will be down here?" Lynn asked.

"I don't know," Bea shrugged. "He said it would be later in the week. The hearing was probably held yesterday or today."

The bartender who had been serving Bea and Lynn and who knew Dude, had picked up a copy of the early afternoon edition of the *Miami Tribune*. The bold headlines leaped up at him.

POLICEMAN SLAIN: POLITICIAN CRITICALLY WOUNDED IN CHICAGO

When he finished reading he carefully folded the news-

paper, brought it to the two women, and set it on the table. Before unfolding it he said, "Dude Brennan has been shot, and according to the paper, he's in a pretty bad way."

The shock was more than he had anticipated. Lynn's glass slipped from her hand, spilling ice cubes and the martini onto her lap. Bea was wild-eyed as her hand shot out and grasped the newspaper.

The bartender called Fred Danker and told him what had happened. Danker immediately phoned Cook County Hospital in Chicago and learned that Dude was still alive but on the critical list. Next, after talking with Lynn and Bea, he phoned the airport. It was too late to make the afternoon flight. The next plane leaving for Chicago that evening was at nine-ten, and would arrive at Midway at one-thirty in the morning. He made reservations for the two women.

Late that same afternoon, arrest warrants were issued for Whalen, Maher, Heeney, Donohue, Teichner, Gorman, Conforti, and Fred O'Malley, the mayor's brother-in-law.

Krebs was taking a thousand-to-one chance that Brennan would possibly pull through. Two of his secretaries had been assigned to call Cook County Hospital every thirty minutes to check on Dude's condition. He had also assigned two of his men to duty outside the hospital room, along with the two uniformed policeman who had been there since he was first brought down from surgery.

Before going home for the night, the attorney general stopped at the hospital and spoke with the chief surgeon. He informed Krebs that despite the massive damage caused by the bullets, Brennan's excellent physical condition prior to the shooting would now be a major factor in his fight to live.

But the surgeon warned Krebs not to get his hopes up. Dude's chances of surviving the next critical twenty-four hours were poor; internal hemorrhaging was his greatest fear.

It was now twenty-three hours since the shooting.

Dude regained consciousness briefly early that evening. He was dimly aware of what had happened, and wondered how long he had been in the hospital. His throat was dry, and the two tubes in his nostrils, running down to his stomach, made it difficult to swallow. It hurt to breathe and when he coughed once, it felt as though his stomach and intestines had torn open.

When he saw the nurse, he tried to ask for a drink of water, but the effort to speak proved too tiring, so he just formed the word "water" with his lips. She told him that he could not drink anything, then went into the bathroom, dampened a face cloth, returned, and moistened his parched lips. He tried to thank her, but he was too tired. The nurse administered an injection of morphine, and Dude drifted back to dreamless sleep.

By eleven o'clock his temperature rose to one hundred and four.

Pneumonia had set in.

When the plane landed at Midway, a light snow had begun to fall. An unexpected tail wind had caused the flight to arrive some twenty minutes ahead of schedule. At that late hour, the airport was practically deserted, and the two women had little difficulty in finding a Red Cap to get their luggage for them, and carry it to a taxi.

"My God, I hope we're not too late," Bea said fearfully.

"We won't be," Lynn assured her.

"I should have stayed here. Oh, God, Lynn, he can't die, he just can't!" Bea said, tears coming to her eyes.

When the cab came to a halt in front of the huge hospital building, Lynn took Bea's hand and said, "You go on ahead. I'll take our bags over to my house. For the time being you stay with me. When you can, call me and let me know how he is."

"I'll call you the minute I know anything," Bea said as she alighted from the cab. She hurried toward the entrance of the hospital, and to the information desk, her heart pounding. The woman behind the desk smiled then asked, "May I help you?"

"Where is Mr. Patrick Brennan?"

"Are you a relative?"

"I'm his fiancée. Please, where is he?" she begged.

"I'm sorry but you are going to have to be cleared by the police and the doctor," the woman said. "Go to the nurse's station on the seventh floor, west surgical, this building and ask for Mrs. Norris. She will be able to help you."

"Thank you," Bea said, then ran toward the bank of elevators at the far end of the enormous lobby.

Mrs. Norris was on the telephone when Bea approached the desk, and held up one finger, indicating that her conversation would soon be ended. "Yes?" the nurse said after she had completed her call.

"I'm Beatrice Hoke, Mr. Brennan's fiancée," she lied for the second time.

The nurse reached for a hospital chart and scanned its contents. She looked up at Bea suspiciously and said, "I don't see your name listed here as one of the authorized visitors, Miss Hoke."

"Call the attorney general, he knows me!" Bea cried out, now on the verge of hysteria.

"Please calm down, Miss Hoke," the nurse said soothingly, "two of the attorney general's men are here now. Wait a moment and I will check with them."

It seemed like hours to Bea before Mrs. Norris returned with a tall young man who introduced himself, saying, "I'm Mel Byers of the attorney general's staff, Miss Hoke. Although you are not on our official list of visitors, Mr. Brennan's father told us that you would be here. It will be up to Mrs. Norris as to whether or not you can see him. We have no objections."

The nurse nodded her approval. She then said, "I think it would be good if you were with him. Mr. Brennan had been holding his own up until about eleven o'clock this evening when he developed pneumonia. The critical period will be the next ten to twelve hours. Mr. Byers will take you to his room."

"Thank you," Bea said, and followed the young man from the attorney general's office.

When Bea entered Dude's room, her heart sank. Bottles of glucose and blood were suspended from stands and the tubes from them ran to his ankles and the backs of his hands. Two more tubes ran from his nostrils to two large bottles positioned under the bed. The bed had been cranked up so that Dude was almost sitting straight up.

Paddy Brennan had been sitting in a chair in the corner of the room, and when he saw Bea he went to her and said, "I'm glad you're here, darlin'. I tried getting you on the phone but no one answered."

"I've been in Miami. How is he?" she asked.

"He wakes up now and then," Paddy said sadly.

He placed a chair at his son's bedside and Bea sat down. His eyes were closed. She looked at him for a long moment then gently placed her fingers over his.

Dude felt the warm touch of her hand on his before he opened his eyes and knew she had come back. He saw the tears running down her cheeks and wanted to tell her not to cry. All he could manage to do was to form the words "Hi, Princess" with his lips.

"Hi, yourself, good-looking," she said, trying her best to smile.

He smiled weakly and thought, what was it Mike had said? Go after her. Go on your knees if you have to. Now he knew what Mike had meant, and now it was too late.

A nurse entered, looked down at one of the large bottles beneath the bed, glanced at Dude's face, then hurried out of the room. Within minutes she returned, accompanied by two doctors. One of them placed a stethoscope to Dude's chest and stomach and listened intently for several seconds.

The doctors consulted quietly, then one of them motioned Bea and Paddy out of the room.

Once out in the hall, the elder of the doctors said to Paddy, "I am afraid that Mr. Brennan has taken a turn for the worse. He has started to bleed internally, and if we don't stop it right away he will die. And the only way we will be able to stop it will be to operate again."

"Well operate, man, operate!" Paddy said, almost shouting.

"I must tell you that in his weakened condition his chances of surviving another operation are almost non-existent, but if we don't operate, he will die within the hour," the surgeon said.

"Go ahead, Doctor," Paddy said, then took Bea's hand in his. We're tough, Irish, darlin'. He'll make it."

Bea went back in the room and kissed Dude lightly on the lips. As she moved away he managed a hoarse whisper, barely audible. "So long, Princess."

It was more than she could bear. She turned and placed her hands on each side of his face, and whispered, "I will always love you, Dude."

The team of surgeons worked feverishly to repair the damage and close as quickly as possible. Ten minutes into the operation, Dude's blood pressure began to drop rapidly, and the anesthesiologist warned the surgeon.

In the gray twilight he heard a voice so soft and so gentle that he wasn't sure he heard it or only imagined it. *There is nothing to be afraid of. Come with me. There will be no more pain, only peace. Come. You need not be afraid.* He felt a calmness and serenity that he had never known before. And he was no longer afraid.

At 3:29 A.M. his heart stopped beating.

At 3:41 A.M. Patrick Michael Brennan was pronounced dead.

Bea stepped out into the still night, the tears still damp on her cheeks. As she slowly descended the worn concrete steps, light snow swirled about her ankles.

She began to walk east. When she was halfway down the block she paused and looked up at the massive, gloomy stone building, and then placed her delicate hand on her stomach." It will be a boy, my darling." She whispered to the night wind, "and you will be with me . . . always."

Gradually the snowfall stopped.

THE MAN THEY CALLED "THE CLOUT"

Dude Brennan wanted to be the big man in his town... wanted it in the worst way. He was willing to make a deal, throw an election, or walk over his own mother to do it.

And in the roughest, rawest city in America, Dude rose from alo to bagman, to middleman between the power brokers in City Ha and the mobsters who controlled them. He was respected and And loved... by Jacqueline Devereaux, the beautiful hooker, and drug addict with whom he lived in a flophouse-turned-gambling by Bea Hoke, his virginal honey-blonde secretary; by Lynn Sull a-delicate beauty with a husband and four children...and a taste for extracurricular excitement.

In a world of drug addicts, racketeers, corrupt politicians, and turncoat cops, Dude Brennan was The Clout.

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